THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Deuided into foure Bookes.

Written in Latin by the Learned and Deuout man

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AND

Translated into English by F. B.

Permissu Superiorum, 1620.

BRITISH
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TO THE HONOVRABLE AND VERTVOVS ELIZABETH VAVX

Mother to the LORD Harrodowne.

HONOVRABLE AND RIGHT WORTHY,

THE publike demonſtratiõ which you haue lately giuẽ of your true deſire to follow the footſteps of our Lord, vndergoing ſo heauy a Croſſe,

for his ſake, with ſo ready & reſolued a mind, hath moued me to dedicate this little Booke, of the *Imitation of Chriſt*, vnto You: aſſuring my ſelfe that it will be no leſſe gratefull to You, to ſee it appeare in light, purged from many miſtaken ſentences which were in the former Tranſlatiõs, then the reading and practice therof, will be profitable to others: it being ſo diuine and excellent a worke, as in the opiniõ of ſuch as can beſt iudge of this matter, of all the Bookes which are written, that treate of ſpirit and Chriſtian Perfection (the holy Scripture excepted) it is inferiour to none, if it excelleth not all.

No booke hath byn more approued by generall conſent, none more often printed and tranſla-

translated into diuers languages, none more esteemed, commẽded, yea cõmaunded also by the chiefe Maisters of Spirit of some Religious Orders, to be often read by euery one in priuate, & once a weeke publikely to all. So full of sweet sense is this diuine Flower, that the most spirituall bees may dayly draw from thence great plenty of celestiall hony. It is a dish of so diuine meate, that it neuer satiates the deuout mind: but as the Wisdome of God doth promise to all such as sit at that heauenly banquet; so shall they find in this spirituall food, *The more they eate it, the more they shall hunger after it.*

And the reason heerof is, for that it contayneth so great depth of spirit, and so great store and variety of heauenly documents,

that it seemeth euer new to the Reader, and like another Manna affoardeth to euery one that delightfull tast which best agreeth with the palate of his soule: and none can loath it, but they whos lusles do carry them to Ægyptian slauery. A true Israëlite may feed vpon it fourty yeares together, and euer find such pleasing tast & increasing strength by vse therof, as will sustaine him in the desert of this world, & enable him to goe on without fainting, till he arriue at his promised inheritance of eternall rest.

The practise of that which this Booke doth teach, couereth the soule with the rich garment of grace, & adorneth it with the splendent pearles of Euangelicall Perfection, which maketh vs more pleasing in the sight of

God,

God, then can the deckings of all earthly iewells make the fayreſt Lady in the Kingdome where you are, appeare beautifull to the eyes of men. It returneth aboundant Gayne for ſuſtained Loſſes, & enlargeth the Liberty which is now reſtrayned. It raiſeth vp to cheereſull cõfidence the debaſed head, & placeth in a Throne of endles Honour thoſe who in this world doe ſeem impriſoned in the blacke cloud of diſgrace.

TO YOV therefore who haue ſo willingly endured the loſſe of your earthly ſubſtance, I haue thought good to preſent this Euangelicall Pearle, & incomparable Treaſure contayned in a little roome. Heere you ſhall find the moſt perfect manner of conforming our ſelues to Chriſt our heauenly Patterne, and ſeethe

vertues set forth in their colours which did most shine in the life of our Lord himselfe; and read in plaine and vulgar phrase those Lessõs of high Perfectiõ, which are commended vnto vs by the highest Wisdome, & which haue made as many Saints, as they haue had diligent and obseruant followers.

ACCEPT therfore, I beseech you, this little Present, presented by him who wisheth you much more temporall happines then your present state affoardeth, & that endles glory, whereof your present suffering is no vncertaine pledge. This first of Ianuary. 1620.

Yours, euer assured
F. B.

OF

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE FIRST BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all the Vanities of the world.

HE that followeth me, walketh not in darkneſſe, ſaith our Lord. Theſe are the words of Chriſt, by which we are admoniſhed, that we

ought to imitate his life, and manners, if we will be partakers of his diuine light, and be deliuered from all blindneſſe of hart. Let therfore our chiefeſt care be to meditate vpon the life of Ieſus Chriſt.

2. The doctrine of Chriſt exceedeth all the doctrine of the Saints: and he that had the light of ſpirit, would diſcouer therin a ſecret and hidden Manna. But it falleth out that many, who often heare the Ghoſpell of Chriſt, do yet feele in themſelues but ſlender motion of any holy deſire, becauſe they are void of the ſpirit of Chriſt. But whoſoeuer will fully and feelingly vnderſtand the words of Chriſt, muſt endeauour to conforme his life wholy to the life of Chriſt.

3. What will it auaile thee to diſpute profoundly of the Trinity, if thou be voyd of humility, and therby diſpleaſing to the Trinity? High words, ſurely, make a man neither holy nor iuſt: but a vertuous life maketh him deare to God.

God. I had rather feele compunction, then vnderſtand the definition therof. If thou dideſt know the whole Bible by hart, and the ſayings of all the Philoſophers, what would all that profit thee, without charity, and the grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but only to loue God, and wholy to ſerue him. This is the higheſt wiſdome, by contempt of the world, to tend towards the Kingdome of heauen.

4. It is therfore vanity to ſeeke after fading riches, and to repoſe truſt in them. It is alſo vanity to gape after honours, and to climbe to nigh degrees. It is vanity to follow the appetites of the fleſh, and to labour for that, for which thou muſt afterwards ſuffer more grieuous punishments. Vanity it is to wiſh to liue long, and to be careleſſe to liue well. It is vanity to mind only this preſent life, and not to foreſee thoſe things which are to come. It is vanity to ſet thy

loue on that which ſpeedily paſſeth away, and not to haſten thither, where euerlaſting ioy is permanent.

5. Call often to mind this prouerbe: That the eye is neuer ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Endeauour therfore to withdraw thy hart from the affection of viſible things, and to turne thy ſelfe to the inuiſible. For they that follow their ſenſuality, do ſtaine their owne conſciences, and looſe the grace of God.

CHAP. II.

Of the humble conceipt of our ſelues.

ALL men by nature deſire to know: but what auaileth knowledg without the feare of God? Surely, an humble husbandman that feareth God, is better then a proud Philoſopher that neglecting himſelfe, laboureth to vnderſtād the courſe

se of the heauens. Who so knoweth himselfe well, groweth daily more contemptible in his owne conceipt, and delighteth not in the praises of men. If I vnderstood al that is to be knowne in the world, and were not in charity, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will iudge me according to my deedes?

2. Giue not thy selfe to inordinate desire of knowledg: for therin is much distraction and deceipt. The learned are willing to seeme so to others, and to be accompted wise. There be many things, which to know, doth little or nothing profit the soule: and he is very vnwise, that bestoweth his labour about other things, then those that may auaile him for the health of his soule. Many words do not satisfy the desires of the hart: but a good life comforteth the mind, and a pure conscience giueth great assurance in the sight of God.

3. How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou

thou vnderſtandeſt, ſo much the more grieuouſly ſhalt thou therfore be iudged, vnleſſe thy life be alſo more holy. Be not therfore extolled in thy owne mind for any art or ſcience which thou knoweſt: but rather let the knowledge giuen thee, make thee more fearefull. If thou thinkeſt that thou vnderſtandeſt & knoweſt much; know alſo that there be many things more, which thou knoweſt not. Thinke not too well of thy ſelf but rather confeſſe thine ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy ſelfe before others, ſith there be many more learned & ſkilfull in the Law then thou? If thou wilt know or learn any thing profitable, deſire not to be knowne, and to be little eſteemed of by men.

4. The higheſt and moſt profitable reading is the true knowledge & conſideration of our ſelues. It is great wiſdome and perfection to eſteeme nothing of our ſelues, & to thinke alwaies well, and commendably of others. If thou ſhouldeſt ſee another

another openly ſinne, or commit any heynous offence; yet oughteſt thou not to eſteeme the better of thy ſelfe, for thou knoweſt not how long thou ſhalt be able to remayne in good eſtate. We are all frayle, but thou oughteſt to eſteeme none more frayle then thy ſelfe.

CHAP. III.

Of the doctrine of Truth.

HAPPY is he whome Truth by it ſelfe doth teach, not by figures, and voices that paſſe away; but as it is in it ſelfe Our owne opinion and ſenſe do often deceaue vs, and it diſcernes little. What auaileth it to diſpute and contend about darke and hidden things; wheras for being ignorant of them we ſhall not ſo much as once be reprehended at the day of iudgment? It is a great folly to neglect the things that are profitable & neceſſary, & giue our minds to that which is curious and hurtfull: we haue

haue eyes and do not see.

2. And what haue we to do with the terms and distinctions of Logitians? He to whome the Eternall Word speaketh, is deliuered from multitudes and diuersities of opinions. By that one Word all things do speake, and al declare the same: and this is the beginning, and that which speaketh vnto vs. No man without that Word vnderstandeth or iudgeth rightly. He to whome all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enioy a quiet mind, and remaine peaceable in God. O God, the eternall Truth, make me one with thee in euerlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read & heare many things. In thee is all that I would haue, and can desire. Let all Doctours hold their peace: let all creatures be silent in thy sight: speak thou alone vnto me.

3. How much the more one is retired within himselfe, and becommeth inwardly sincere, and pure: so much

much the more, and higher myſteries doth he vnderſtand without labour: for that he receaueth light of vnderſtanding from aboue. A pure, ſincere and ſtayed ſpirit is not diſtracted, though he be imploied in many workes: for that he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inward tranquillity, without ſeking himſelf in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more thē the vnmortified deſires of thine owne hart? A good & deuout man firſt of all diſpoſeth in himſelfe his outward works: neither do they draw him to the deſires of an inordinate inclination; but he ordereth thē to the preſcript of reaſon. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to ouercom himſelfe? This ought to be our endeauour, to conquer our ſelues daily, to wax ſtronger, and be more able to ſubdue our paſſions, and alwaies in this way to get ſome ground.

4. All perfection in this life hath ſome imperfections mixt with it: &

no knowledg of ours is void of darknesse, and ignorance. An humble knowledg of thy self is a more secure way to God, then a deepe search after learning: yet learning is not to be blamed, nor the only knowledg of any thing whatsoeuer is to be disliked, it being good in it selfe, and ordained by God: but a good conscience, and a vertuous life is to be preferred before it. And for that many endeauour, rather to get knowledg, then to liue well: therfore they are often deceiued, & reape either none, or very slender profit of their labours.

5. O, if men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out of vices, & planting of vertues, as they doe in mooving doubts & questions; neither would there so much hurt be done, nor so great scandall be giuen in the world, nor so much loosnes be practised in places erected for vertue! Truly at the day of Iudgment we shall not be examined what wee haue read, but what we haue done:

nor

nor how well we haue ſpoken, but how vertuouſly we haue liued. Tell me now, where are all thoſe great Doctours and Maiſters, with whom thou waſt well acquainted, whilſt they liued & flouriſhed in learning? Now others poſſeſſe their liuings, & perhaps do ſcarce euer thinke of thé. In their life time they ſeemed ſomthing, and now they are not ſpoken of.

6. O, how quickly doth the glory of this world paſſe away! Would God their life had byn anſwerable to their learning, then had their ſtudy and reading byn to good purpoſe. How many periſh in this world by reaſon of vaine learning, who take little care of the ſeruice of God? And becauſe they rather chooſe to be great then humble: therfore they vanith away in their own thoughts. He is truly great that is great in charity. He is truly great, that is little in himſelfe, and that maketh no accompt of the height of honour. He is truly wiſe, that accompteth all earthly

thly things as dung, that he may gaine Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfilleth the will of Christ, and forsaketh his owne.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence, and Foresight in our actions.

WE must not giue eare to euery suggestiō or instinct, but ought warily, & leasurly to ponder things according to the will of God. But (alas) such is our weakneſſe that we rather often belieue, and speake euil of others, then good. Thoſe that are perfectly vertuous, do not easily giue credit to euery thing that is told thē, for they know that human frailty is prone to euill, and very subiect to faile in words.

2. It is great wisdome not to be rash in thy procedings, nor to stand stifly in thine own conceipts: as also not to belieue euery thing which thou heareſt: nor preſently to relate

againe to others, what thou haſt heard, or doſt beleiue. Conſult with him that is wiſe, and of a good conſciẽce, and ſeeke to be inſtructed by a better then thy ſelfe, rather then to follow thine owne inuentions. A good life maketh a man wiſe according to God, & giueth him experience in many things. How much the humbler one is in himſelfe, & more ſubiect and reſigned vnto God: ſo much the more prudent ſhall he be in all his affaires, and enioy greater peace and quiet of hart.

CHAP. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

TRVTH, not eloquence is to be ſought for in holy Scriptures. Ech part of thẽ is to be read with the ſame ſpirit it was made. We ſhould rather ſearch after ſpirituall profit in Scriptures, then ſubtility of ſpeach. We ought to read deuout & ſimple bookes as willingly as high and learned.

Let

Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or small learning: but let the pure word of truth moue thee to read. Search not who spake this, or that, but marke what is spoken.

2. Men passe away; but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer. God speaketh vnto vs sundry waies, without respect of persons. Our owne curiosity oftē hindreth vs in reading of the Scriptures, when as we will examine, and discusse that which we should rather passe ouer without more adoe. If thou desire to reape profit, read humbly, plainly, & faithfully: neuer desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, & heare with silence the words of holy men: dislike not the Parables of Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of inordinate Desires, and Affections.

WHENSOEVER a man desireth any thing inordinatly, he is presently disquieted in himselfe. The proud and couetous can neuer rest. The poore and humble in spirit, liue togeather in all peace. The man that is not wholy dead in himselfe, is quickly tempted, and ouercome in small and trifling things. The weake in spirit, and that is yet in a manner subiect to his appetites, and prone to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himselfe altogeather frō earthly desires. And therfore he is often afflicted, when he goeth about to retire himselfe from thē: and easily falleth into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath followed therin his appetite, he is presently disquie-

quieted with remorse of conscience for that he yielded to his passion, which profiteth him nothing to the obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of mind therfore, is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the hart of a carnall man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spirituall and feruent.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vaine Hope, and Pride.

HE is vaine that putteth his trust in men, or creatures. Be not ashamed to serue others for the loue of Iesus Christ: nor to be esteemed poore in this world. Presume not vpon thy selfe, but place thy hope in God. Do what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust not in thine own knowledg, nor in the wisdome or prudence of any liuing creature: but rather in the grace of God,

God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, if thou haue it: nor in the power of thy friends: but in God, who giueth all things, and aboue all desireth to giue thee himselfe. Extoll not thy selfe for the stature, and beauty of thy body, which is dissolued, and disfigured with euery little sickness. Take not pleasure in thy naturall gifts, or wit, least thereby thou displease God, to whome appertaineth all the good whatsoeuer nature hath giuen thee.

3. Esteeme not thy selfe better thē others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knoweth what is in man, thou be accompted worse then they. Be not proud of thy good workes, for the iudgments of God are farre different from the iudgments of men, & that often offendeth him, which pleaseth them. If there be any good in thee, belieue that there is much more in others, that so thou maist the better keepe within thy

hart the precious treasure of humility. It is no preiudice vnto thee to esteeme thy selfe worse then all the world: but it hurteth thee very much, to preferre thy selfe before any one. The humble enioy continuall peace: but in the hart of the proud, is enny and often indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

That too much familiarity is to be shunned.

LAy not thy hart open to euery one: but treate of thy affaires with the wise, and such as feare God. Conuerse not much with yong people, and strangers. Flater not the rich; neither do thou appeare willingly before great personages. Keep company with the humble, simple, deuout, and vertuous: and confer with them of those things, that may edify. Be not familiar with any woman: but in generall commend all good women to God. Desire to be fami-

familiar with God alone, and his angells, and fly the knowledge of men.

2. We must haue charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient. Sometimes it falleth out, that the fame of some person that is vnknowne, is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstanding is not gratefull to the eies of the beholders. We thinke sometimes to please others by our company, and we rather distast them with our disordered manners, and the euil customes which they discouer in vs.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience, and Subiection.

IT is a great matter to liue in Obedience, to be vnder a Superiour, and not to be at our owne disposition. It is much safer to liue in the state of subiection, then of gouernment. Many liue vnder Obedience, rather for necessity then for charity: and such are discontented,

and do easily repine and murmure. Neither can they attaine to freedome of mind, vnlesse they willingly and hartily put them selues vnder Obedience for the loue of God. Go whither thou wilt, thou shalt find no rest, but in humble subiection vnder the gouerument of a Superiour. The imagination and change of places haue deceiued many.

2. True it is, that euery one willingly doth that which agreeth with his owne sense and liking; and is apt to affect those most, that are of his owne mind: But if God be amongst vs, we must leaue our owne iudgment, that so peace and quietnes may be the better perserued. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things? Trust not therfore too much to thine owne conceipts: but be willing to heare the iudgment of others. If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding dost leaue it for God, and followest the opinion of another, it shall be better for thee.

3. I haue often heard, that it is more ſecure to heare and take counſell, then to giue it. It may alſo fall out, that ech ones opinion may be good: but to refuſe to yield to others, when as reaſon, or cauſe requireth it, is a token of wilfullnes & pride.

CHAP. X.

Of the auoyding ſuperfluity of words.

FLY the vnquietnes of men as much as thou canſt: for the talke of worldly affaires hindreth very much, although they be recounted with ſincere intention: for we are quickely defiled, and as it were enthralled with vanity. I could wiſh that I had often times held my peace, when I haue ſpoken: and that I had not byn in company. Why do we ſo willingly ſpeake, and talke one with another, when notwithſtãding we ſeldom returne to ſilence, without hurt of conſcience? The cauſe wherfore we ſo willingly talke, is, for that by diſcourſing one with another, we ſeeke to receaue comfort one of

another: & desire to ease our mind, ouerwearied with sundry thoughts: and we talke willingly, and thinke of those things which we loue best, and most desire: or of those, which we feele most contrary vnto vs.

2. But alas, often times in vaine, and to no end: for this outward comfort is cause of no small losse of inward, and diuine consolation. Therfore we must watch and pray, least our time passe without any fruit or profit. If it be lawfull, and expedient for thee to speak; speak those things that may edify. An euill custome, and neglect of our owne good, doth very much slacke the raynes to inconsiderate speach: Yet deuout discourses of heauëly things, do greatly further our progresse in spirit, especially where persons of one mind and spirit be gathered togeather in God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the obteyning of peace, and zeale of ſpirituall profit.

WE might enioy peace, if we would not buſie our ſelues with the words and deedes of other men, which appertaine nothing to our charge. How can he liue long in peace, that thruſteth himſelfe into the cares of others, or that little or ſeldom recollecteth himſelfe within his owne breſt? Bleſſed are the ſimple and pure minds: for they ſhall enioy much peace.

2. What is the reaſon, why ſome of the Saints were ſo perfect, and contemplatiue? Becauſe they laboured to mortify thēſelues wholy to earthly deſires; and therefore they could with their whole hart, giue themſelues to God, and freely attend to their owne affaires. We are too much led by our owne paſſions, and too ſolicitous for tranſitory things. We alſo ſeldome ouer-

come any one vice perfectly, and are not inflamed with a feruent desire to profit in spirit: and therfore we remaine cold in deuotion, and full of tepidity.

3. If we were perfectly dead vnto our selues, and not intangled within our owne breasts: then we might also haue some tast of diuine things, and feele the sweetnesse of heauenly contemplation. The greatest, and indeed the whole impediment is, for that we are not free frō our passions, and disordered inclinations: neither do we endeauour to enter into that path of perfection, which the Saints haue walked before vs: and when any small aduersity befalleth vs, we are too quickly deiected, and turne our selues to human comforts.

4. If we endeauour like men of courage to stand continually in the battaile; surely we should feele the fauourable assistance of God frō heauen. For he who giueth vs occasion to fight, to the end we may get the

the victory, is ready to succour those that fight manfully, and do trust in his grace. If we esteeme our progresse in Religious life, to cõsist only in these exteriour obseruations: our deuotion will quickly be at an end. Let vs set the axe to the roote, that being freed from passions, we may enioy true peace of mind.

5. If euery yeare we would root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect men. But now often times we perceaue it goeth cõtrary, and that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conuersion, then after many yeares of our profession. Our feruour and profit should increase daily; but now it is accõpted a great matter, if one can retaine but some part of his first spirit. If we would vse but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to performe all things afterwards with ease and ioy of hart.

6. It is a hard matter to leaue that to which we are accustomed;

but harder to do againſt our owne wils. But if thou doſt not ouercome little and eaſy things: how wilt thou ouercome harder matters? Reſiſt thy inclination in the firſt motions, and breake off euill cuſtomes, leaſt perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty. O, if thou dideſt conſider how much inward peace vnto thy ſelfe, and ioy to others thou ſhouldeſt procure by demeaning thy ſelfe well; I ſuppoſe thou wouldeſt be more carefull of thy ſpirituall profit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of Aduerſity.

IT is good that we haue ſometimes griefe and aduerſities: for they often make a mā enter into himſelf, and remember that he is heere in baniſhment, and ought not to place his truſt in any worldly thing. It is good that we be ſometimes contradicted; & that there be an euill or hard conceipt had of vs: and this, although

although we do, and intend well. These things help often to the attayning of humility, and defend vs frō vaine glory: for thē we chiefly seeke God for our inward witnesse, when outwardly we be contemned by men, and when there is no credit giuen vnto vs.

2. And therfore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needed not to seeke many comforts of men. When a good and vertuous mā is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with euill thoughts; then he vnderstādeth better the great need he hath of Gods assistance, without whose help he perceaueth he can do nothing that is good. Then also he sorroweth, lamenteth, and prayeth for the miseries he suffereth. Then is he weary of liuing longer, and wisheth that death would come, that he might be dissolued, & be with Christ. Then also he well perceaueth, that complete security, and perfect peace cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptations.

SO long as we liue in this world we cannot be without tribulation & temptation: for as it is writen in Iob: Temptation is the life of man vpon earth. Euery one therfore ought to be carefull, and diligently to arme himselfe with praier against his tentations, least the Diuell find time and place to deceaue him; who neuer sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whome he may deuoure. No man is so perfect and holy, but hath sometimes temptations: and we cannot be altogeather free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable vnto men; though they be troublesome, and grieuous: for in them man is humbled, purged, and instructed. All the Saints haue passed and profited through many tribulations ad temptations; & they that could not beare temptatiõs, became reprobate & fell from God. There is no order so holy, nor place so secret, where

where there be not temptations or aduersities.

3. There is no man that is altogeather free from temptations, whileſt he liueth on earth: for in our ſelues is the cauſe therof, being born with inclination to euill. When one tentation or tribulation goeth away, another commeth: and we ſhall euer haue ſomething to ſuffer, becauſe we haue loſt that innocency with which we were created. Many ſeeke to fly temptations, and do fall more grieuouſly into them. By flight alone we cannot ouercome: but by patience & true humility, we become ſtronger then all our enemies

4. He that only auoideth them outwardly, and doth not plucke them vp by the root, ſhall profit little: yea temptation will the ſooner returne vnto him; and he ſhall feele himſelfe in worſe caſe then before. By little and little, and by patience with longanimity (through Gods help) thou ſhalt more eaſily ouercome, then with violence, and thine owne

owne importunity. Often take coũ-ſell in temptations, and deale not roughly with him that is tempted; but giue him comfort, as thou wouldeſt wiſh to be done to thy ſelfe.

5. The beginning of all euill temptations, is inconſtancy of mind, and little confidence in God: for as a ſhip without a ſterne is toſſed to and fro with the waues; ſo the man that is negligent, and leaueth his purpoſe, is many waies tempted. Fyre trieth iron, and temptation a iuſt man. We know not oftentimes what we are able to do, but temptations do ſhew vs what we are. We muſt be watchfull, eſpecially in the beginning of the temptation, for the enemy is then more eaſily ouercome, if he be not ſuffered to enter the dore of our harts, but be reſiſted without the gate at his firſt knocke. Wherfore one ſaid: Withſtand the beginnings, for an after-remedy comes often to late. Firſt there commeth to the mind an euill thought, then a ſtrong imagination

therof,

therof, afterwards delight, and an euill motion, and then consent: and so by little and little our wicked enemy getteth full entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting: so much weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest temptations in the beginning of their cōuersion; others in the later end; others againe are much troubled almost through the whole time of their life. Some are but easily tempted according to the wisdome, and equity of the diuine appointment, which weigheth the state & deserts of men; and ordaineth all things for the sauing of his elect and chosen seruants.

7. We ought not therefore to despaire when we are tempted; but so much the more feruently to pray vnto God, that he will vouchsafe to help vs in all tribulations; who surely according to the saying of S. Paul, will

will make with temptation ſuch iſſue, that we may be able to ſuſtaine it. Let vs therfore humble our ſelues vnder the hand of God in all temptations and tribulations; for he will ſaue, and exalt the humble in ſpirit.

8. In temptations and afflictions man is proued, how much he hath profited: and his merit is therby the greater before God, and his vertues do more openly appeare. Neither is it any great matter if a man be deuout and feruent, when he feeleth no heauines: but if in time of aduerſity he beare himſelf patiently, there is hope of great good. Some are kept from great temptations, and are often ouercome in ſmall ones, which do daily occurre; to the end that being humbled, they may neuer preſume on themſelues in great matters, who in ſo ſmall things do ſee themſelues ſo weake.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of auoyding rash Iudgement.

TVRNE thine eyes vnto thy selfe, & beware thou iudge not rashly the deeds of other men. In iudging of others a man alwaies laboureth in vaine, often erreth, and quickly sinneth; but in iudging & discussing of himselfe, he alwaies laboureth fruitfully. We often iudg of things according to our owne desire; for priuate affection bereaues vs easily of true iudgment. If God were alwaies the pure intention of our desire, we should not be so much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2. But oftentimes some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth vs after it. Many secretly seeke themselues in their actions, and know it not. They seeme also to liue in good peace of mind, when things are don according to their will, and opinion; but

but if it ſucceed otherwiſe then they deſire, they are ſtraight waies troubled, and much afflicted. The diuerſities of iudgments & opinions, cauſe oftentimes diſſentions between religious and deuout perſons.

3. An old cuſtome is hardly broken, and no man is willingly lead further then himſelfe liketh. If thou doſt more rely vpon thine owne reaſon or induſtry, then vpon the vertue of obedience to Ieſus Chriſt; it wilbe long before thou be illuminated with grace, for Almighty God will haue vs perfectly ſubiect vnto him, and that we tranſcend the narrow limits of human reaſon, enflamed with his loue.

CHAP. XV.

Of VVorkes done of charity.

FOR no worldly thing, nor for the loue of any man, is any euil to be done: but yet for the profit of one that ſtandeth in need, a good worke is ſometimes to be left off, or chaunged alſo for a better, For by

by doing this, a good worke is not loſt, but changed into another of greater merit. The exteriour worke without charity profiteth nothing: but whatſoeuer is done of charity be it neuer ſo little and contemptible in the ſight of the world, it is fruitfull, and of great eſteeme in the ſight of God. For God weigheth more with how much loue one worketh, then how much he doth. He doth much, that loueth much.

2. He doth much that doth a thing well: he doth well that rather ſerueth the commō good of others, then his owne will. Oftentimes it ſeemeth to be charity, and it is rather carnality: becauſe naturall inclination, ſelfe will, hope of reward, and deſire of our owne commodity will ſeldome be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity, ſeeketh himſelfe in nothing: but only deſireth in all things that the glory of God ſhould be exalted. He alſo enuieth none: becauſe he loueth no priuate good: neither wil he

reioyce

reioyce in himſelfe; but wiſheth aboue al things to enioy God. He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholy referreth it vnto God, from whom, as from the fountaine, all things proceed: in whom finally all Saints haue perfect reſt, by fruition of his glory. O he that had one ſparke of perfect charity, how eaſily would he diſcerne, that all earthly things be ful of vanity!

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

THOSE things that a man cannot amend in himſelfe or in others, he ought to ſuffer patiently, vntil God ordaine otherwiſe. Think that perhaps it is better ſo, for thy tryall and patience, without which our merits are not much to be eſteemed. Thou oughteſt to pray notwithſtanding when thou haſt ſuch impediments, that God would vouchſafe to help thee, and that thou

thou maiſt beare them patiently.

2. If one that is once or twice warned doth not amend, contend not with him; but cõmit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured in all his ſeruãts, who knoweth how to turne euill into good. Endeauour to be patient in bearing with the defects & infirmities of others: for that thy ſelfe alſo haſt many things, which muſt be ſuffered by others. If thou canſt not make thy ſelfe ſuch an one as thou wouldeſt; how canſt thou expect to haue another in all things to thy liking? We would willingly haue others perfect, and yet we amend not our owne faults.

3. We will haue others ſeuerely corrected, and will not be corrected our ſelues. The large liberty of others diſpleaſeth vs: and yet we will not haue our deſires denied vs. We will haue others kept vnder by rigorous laws; but in no ſort will we our ſelues be reſtrained. And thus it appeareth, how ſeldome we weigh

our

our neighbour in the same ballance with our selues. If all men were perfect, what should we haue to suffer of our neighbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learne to beare one anothers burden: for no man is without defect, no man without burden, no man sufficient of himselfe, no man endued with so much wisdom as he needeth: but we ought to beare with one another, confort one another, help, instruct, & admonish one another. Aduersity best discouereth how great vertue ech one hath: for occasions make not a man fraile, but do shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Religious life.

THOV must learne to break thy owne will in many things, if thou wilt haue peace, and concord with others. It is no small matter to dwell in community, or in a congregation, & to conuerse therin without

out complaint, and to perſeuer there faithfully vntill death. Bleſſed is he that hath there liued well, and ended happily. If thou wilt perſeuer in grace as thou oughteſt, and profit in vertue, eſteeme thy ſelfe as a baniſhed man, and a pilgrim vpon earth. Thou muſt be cõtented for the loue of Chriſt to be eſteemed as a foole in this world, if thou deſire to lead a vertuous, and perfect religious life.

2. The wearing of a religious habit, & ſhauing of the Crowne do little profit: but chang of manners, and perfect mortification of paſſions make a true religious man. He that ſeeketh any thing els but God, and the health of his ſoule, ſhall find nothing but tribulation & ſorrow. Neither can he remaine long in peace, that laboureth not to be in the meaneſt place, and ſubiect to all.

3. Thou camſt to ſerue, not to be ſerued. Know that thou waſt called to ſuffer and to labour, not to be idle, or to ſpend thy time in talke. Heere in the ſchoole of Chriſt men are

are proued as gold in the fornace. Heere no man can ſtand, vnleſſe he humble himſelfe with his whole hart, for the loue of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the examples of the holy Fathers.

CONSIDER the liuely examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion ſhined; and thou ſhalt ſee how little it is, and almoſt nothing, which we do now in theſe daies. Alas, what is our life if it be compared to thē! The Saints & friends of Chriſt ſerued our Lord in hunger and thirſt, in could & nakedneſſe, in labour and wearines, in watching and faſting, in prayer and holy meditations, in perſecutions & many reproaches.

2. O, how many and grieuous tribulations ſuffered the Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſours, Virgins, & all the reſt that endeauoured to follow

low the steps of Christ! They hated their liues in this world, that they might possesse their soules in euerlasting life. O, How strait and poore a life led the holy Fathers in the wildernes! How long and grieuous tentations suffered they! How often and how grieuously were they assaulted by their Ghostly enemy! How feruent praiers offered they daily to God! How rigorous abstinence did they vse! How feruent zeale, and care had they of their spirituall profit! How strong, and continuall a combat had they for the ouercomming of vices! How pure & vpright intention kept they vnto God! In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continuall prayer, although when they laboured also, they ceased not from mentall prayer.

3. They spent all their tyme with profit: euery houre seemed short for the seruice of God: and for the great sweetnes they had in contemplation, they forgot the necessi-

ty of corporall refection. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kinsfolkes; they desired to haue nothing which appertained to the worle; they scarse tooke things necessary for the sustenance of life; they grieued to serue their bodies euen in necessity. They were poore in earthly things, but rich in grace & vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were repleniſhed with grace, & spirituall comfort.

4. They were strangers in the world, but neere and familiar frieds to God. They seemed to themselues as nothing, and abiect to this world: but they were precious, and beloued in the eyes of God. They were grounded in true humility, liued in simple obedience, walked in charity and patience: and therfore they profited dayly in spirit, and obteyned great grace in Gods sight. They were giuen for an example and patterne of perfection in Gods Church, and their example should more styr

vs vp to a desire of our spirituall profit, then the number of the lukewarme and dissolute liuers draw vs to the neglect therof.

5. O, how great was the feruour of all religious persons in the beginning of their holy Institution? How great was their deuotion to prayer? How diligent emulation of vertue? How exact discipline florished? How great reuerence and obedience, vnder the rule of their superiour, obserued they in all things. Their footsteps yet remaining do testify that they were indeed holy and perfect men: who fighting so valiantly, trode the world vnder their feet. Now he is greatly accompted of, that breaketh not the rule, and that can with patience endure that which he hath professed.

6. O couldnes and negligence of our time, that we so quickly decline from our first feruour, and are come to that passe, that very slouth and couldnes of spirit makes our owne liues tedious vnto vs.

Would to God the desire to profit in vertue did not wholy sleepe in thee, who hast often seene the holy examples of deuout and religious soules.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Exercise of a good, and Religious person.

THE life of a Religious person ought to shine with all vertues: that he may inwardly be such as outwardly he seemeth to men. And with reason thou oughtest to be much more within, then is perceaued without: for God behouldeth the hart, whome we ought most highly to reuerence whersoeuer we are, and walke in purity like Angels in his sight; and to renew dayly our purposes, and styr vp our selues to feruour, as though this were the first day of our conuersion; and to say: Help me, my God, in this my good purpose, and in thy holy service; and graunt that I may now this

this day begin perfectly: for that which I haue done hitherto, is nothing.

2. According to our purpose, shalbe the successe of our profit: and much diligence is necessary to him that will profit much. And if he that firmely purposeth, often faileth: what shall he do, that seldome purposeth any thing, or with little certainty? It may fall out sundry waies that we leaue off our purpose: and if for light occasiõs we omit our accustomed exercises, it seldome passeth without some losse. The purpose of iust men is rather grounded vpon the grace of God, then on their owne wisdome, in whom also they alwaies haue confidence, in whatsoeuer they take in hand. For man doth purpose, but God disposeth: neither is the way of man in his owne hands.

3. If an accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted for some worke of charity, or of intention to profit our neighbour, it may easily afterward

ward be recouered: but if it be lightly left through inconſtancy or negligence, it is an offence, and will proue hurtfull. Though we endeauour what we can, yet ſhall we faile in many things. But yet we muſt alwaies purpoſe ſomthing certaine, eſpecially againſt that which moſt hinders vs. We muſt examine well, and order both our exteriour and interiour actions; for that both are expedient for our progreſſe in vertue.

4. If thou canſt not alwaies recollect thy ſelfe, yet do it ſomtimes, and that at leaſt once euery day: to wit in the morning, or euening. In the morning make thy good purpoſe: in the enening examine thy ſelfe what thou haſt byn that day in word, deed, or thought: for that in theſe oftentimes perhaps thou haſt offended God, and thy neighbour. Arme thy ſelfe with courage againſt the malicious attempts of thine enemy. Refraine Gluttony & thou ſhalt more eaſily bridle all the di-

disordered inclinations of the flesh. Neuer be altogeather idle, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or labouring somthing of profit for the common good: but bodily exercises are to be discreetly vsed, and not to be vndertaken equally of all.

5. Those things that be not cõmon, are not to be done in the sight of all: for priuate things are best done in secret. But thou must beware, thou neglect not that to which thou art bound by common rule, and be ready in performing thy priuate deuotions: but hauing fully & faithfully accomplished all thy duties, and those things that were enioyned thee, if thou hast further leasure, returne to thy selfe as thy deuotion desireth. All cannot vse the same exercise, but one is more conuenient for this person, another for that. According to the diuersity of times also, diuers exercises are fitting; for some suite better with festiuall dayes, others with daies of

labour. We haue need of one kind in temptations, and of others in time of peace and quiet. We desire to thinke of other things, when we are sorrowfull, then we do when we are cheerfull in our Lord.

6. When principall feasts draw neere, good exercises are to be renewed; & the intercessions of Saints more feruently to be implored. Frō feast to feast, we should make some good purpose, as though we were then to depart out of this world, & to come to the euerlasting feasts of heauen. And therfore we ought to prepare our selues carefully at holy times, and to liue more deuoutly, and to keep more exactly all things that we are to obserue, as though shortly we were to receaue reward of our labour at Gods hands.

7. And if it be differred, let vs think that we were not well prepared, nor worthy as yet of so great glory, as shall be reuealed in vs at the time appointed: and let vs labour to prepare our selues better for our de-

departure. Bleſſed is that ſeruant (ſayth S. Luke the Euangeliſt) whom when his Lord commeth, he ſhall find watching: verily I ſay vnto you, he ſhall place him ouer all that he poſſeſſeth.

CHAP. XX.

Of the loue of Solitude, and Silence.

SEEKE a fit time to attend to thy ſelfe, and often thinke of the benifits of God. Leaue curious things Read ouer ſuch matters, as may cauſe rather compunction, them the labour of much ſtudy. If thou withdraw thy ſelfe from ſuperfluous talke, and idle wandring about, as alſo from hearing of newes & tales; thou ſhalt find ſufficient, and fit time to thinke of good things. The greateſt Saints auoyded the company of men as much as they could, & choſe to liue to God in ſecret.

2. One ſaid: As often as I haue bene amongſt men, I haue returned

leſſe man. The ſame we find by experience when we talke long. It is eaſier to keep ſilence altogeather, then not to exceed in words. It is eaſier for a man to keepe home, then to demeane himſelfe as he ought in all things abroad. He therfore that deſireth to attaine to internall, and ſpirituall graces, ought with Ieſus to withdraw himſelfe from the people. No man goeth ſafely abroad, but he that gladly keepeth home. No man ſecurely gouerneth, but he that delighteth to liue in ſubiection. No man ſecurely commandeth, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

2. No man ſecurely reioyceth, vnleſſe he hath within him the teſtimony of a good conſcience. And yet the ſecurity of Saints was alwaies full of the feare of God. Neither were they leſſe carefull and humble in themſelues, for that they ſhined outwardly with grace, and great vertues. But the ſecurity of euill men riſeth of pride and deceaueth them.

Neuer

Neuer promise to thy selfe security in this life, although thou seeme to be a good Religious man, or deuout Hermite.

4. Oftentimes those, who in the iudgment of men were of better esteeme, haue byn in greatest danger, by reason of their too much cõfidence. Wherfore it is more profitable to many, not to be altogeather free from temptations, but to be often assaulted; least they should be too secure, and so perhaps be lifted vp in pride: least also they should too freely giue themselues to outward comforts O, how good a conscience should he keep, that would neuer seeke transitory ioy: would neuer busy himselfe with the things of this world: and how great peace and quietnes should he possesse, that would cut off all vaine solicitude, & only thinke of diuine things, & such as are profitable for his soule, and place all his hope in God.

5. No man is worthy of heauenly comfort, vnlesse he haue dili-

gently exerciſed himſelfe in holy compunction. If thou deſireſt true contrition of hart, retire thy ſelfe into ſome ſecret and ſolitary place, & exclude from thy mind the tumults, & vnquietnes of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be ye ſory. In thy Cell thou ſhalt find that which abroad thou ſhalt often looſe. The Cell, if thou continue in it, waxeth ſweet, and if thou loue not to ſtay in it, it becometh irkſome. If in the beginning of thy conuerſion thou accuſtome thy ſelf to remaine in it, and keepe it well, it wilbe afterwards vnto thee a deare friend, and a moſt pleaſant comfort.

6. In ſilence and quietnes a deuout ſoule perfecteth her ſelfe, and learneth the ſecrets of holy Scriptures. There ſhe findeth flouds of teares, with which ſhe may euery night waſh and clenſe her ſelfe, & be made ſo much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the further off ſhe liueth from al worldly diſquiet. Who ſo therfore withdra-

draweth himſelfe from his acquaintance & friends; God with his holy Angels will draw neere vnto him. It were better for a man to ly hidden, and haue care of himſelf, then being careleſſe of his ſoule, to worke miracles in the world It is commendable for a Religious perſon to go abroad ſeldome, to fly to be ſeene, & to be vnwilling to ſee men.

7. Why wilt thou ſee that which is not lawfull for thee to haue. The world paſſeth away, and all his delights. The deſires of our ſenſuality, draw vs to walke abroad, but when the houre is paſt, what bringeſt thou home, but a burdened conſcience, and diſtracted thoughts? A ioyfull going abroad, bringeth often a ſorrowfull comming home; and a merry euening makes a ſad morning. So all carnall ioy entreth gently, but in the end it cauſeth remorſe & deſtruction. What is elſwhere to be ſeene, which thou canſt not ſee heere? Heere thou ſeeſt heauen and earth, and all the elements, of which all

all other things are made.

8. What is there any where to be ſeene that can long continue vnder the ſunne? Thou thinkeſt perhaps to ſatiate thy ſelfe, & haue thy fill; but thou ſhalt neuer attaine it. If it were poſſible for thee to ſee all things created, preſent before thine eyes, what were it all but a vaine & vnprofitable ſight? Lift vp thine eyes to God in heauen, & aſke pardon of thy ſinnes and negligences. Leaue vaine things to the vaine. Attend thou to that which God cõmandeth. Shut thy dore vpon thee, and call vpon Ieſus thy beloued. Be thou with him in thy Cell, for thou ſhalt not find ſo great peace in any other place. If thou hadſt ſtaied within & not giuen eare to idle newes, thou haddeſt kept thy ſelfe better in good peace. But now that thou delighteſt ſometimes to heare nouelties, it is fit thou ſuffereſt for it ſome trouble & diſquiet of mind.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of hart.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keep thy ſelfe alwaies in the feare of God, and yield not too much ſcope to liberty. Containe all thy ſenſes vnder the rule of diſcipline, and giue not thy ſelfe to fooliſh mirth. Giue thy ſelfe to compunction of hart, & thou ſhalt find deuotion. Compunction diſcouereth much good, which with too much liberty is quickly loſt. It is meruaile that a man can euer perfectly reioyce in this life, if he conſider his baniſhment, & weigh the many perils, wherwith his ſoule is inuironed. The leuity of our mind, and the little care we heaue of our faults, makes vs not to feele the ſorrowes of our ſoule.

2. But oftentimes we vainely laugh, when we haue iuſt cauſe to weep. There is neither true liberty, not good mirth, but that which is in the

the feare of God, accompanied with a good conſcience. Happy is he, that can auoyd all cauſe of diſtraction, & draw himſelfe to the vnion of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile, or burden his conſcience. Fight manfully: one cuſtome ouercomes another. If thou canſt forbeare to intermeddle with that which belongs to others; they will not hinder thee in that which thou haſt to do.

3. Buſy not thy ſelfe in matters which appertaine to others: neither do thou meddle at all with the affaires of thy betters. Looke firſt of all to thy ſelfe, and haue a more eſpeciall care to admonith thy ſelf, then whomſoeuer thou loueſt beſt. If thou haſt not the fauour of men, be not therefore grieued: but let this ſeeme vnto thee a moſt iuſt cauſe of griefe, that thou lookeſt not to thy ſelf with that care, which beſeemeth the ſeruant of God, and a deuout religious perſon! It is oftentimes better and more ſecure, that a man hath

not

not many consolations in this life, especially such, as are agreable to the inclination of our corrupt nature. But that we haue none at all, or do seldome tast diuine cõforts, the fault is ours, that do not seeke for compunction of hart, nor do wholy forsake the vaine cõforts of this world.

4. Acknowledge thy selfe vnworthy of diuine comforts, and that thou hast deserued great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world grieuous & loathsom vnto him. A good man findeth alwaies sufficient cause of teares and sorrow; for whether he consider himselfe, or weigh the estate of his neighbour, he knoweth that none liueth here without tribulation. And how much the more throughly he considereth himselfe: so much the more is his sorrow. Our sinnes and vices in which we are so plunged, that we can seldome contemplate the things of heauen, do minister vnto vs matter of most iust sorrow and harty contrition.

5. If

5. If thou didſt thinke more diligently of thy death, then of liuing long, thou wouldeſt without doubt be more carefull in the amēdment of thy life. And if thou wouldeſt conſider within thy ſelfe, the paines of hell, or of purgatory, I am perſwaded it would moue thee to endure any labour or paine whatſoeuer in this world, and not to feare any kind of auſterity. But becauſe theſe things enter not to the hart, & we ſtill loue that which delighteth vs, therfore we remaine could and void of ſpirituall vigour.

6. Oftentimes our want of ſpirit is the cauſe, that our wretched bodies do ſo quickly cōplaine. Pray therefore with all humility to our Lord, that he will vouchſafe to giue thee the ſpirit of contrition, and ſay with the Prophet: Feed me, o Lord, with the bread of teares, & giue me to drinke with teares in meaſure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the consideration of humane Misery.

MISERABLE thou art whersoeuer thou be, & whitherſoeuer thou turneſt, if thou turneſt not thy ſelfe to God. Why art thou troubled when things ſucceed not as thou wouldeſt, and deſireſt? Who is there that hath all things as he will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man vpon earth. There is not any man in this world without ſome tribulation or affliction, though he be a King, or a Pope. Who thinkeſt thou then is in beſt caſe? Truly he that willingly ſuffereth ſomething for God.

2. Many weak & feeble men ſay: Behould how well ſuch a one liues, how rich, how powerfull, how beautifull, how great a man he is: but lift vp thine eyes to the riches of heauē, and thou ſhalt ſee that all temporall proſperity is as nothing, full of vn-

cer-

certainty, and which rather oppreſſeth then otherwiſe: for it is neuer had without ſolicitude & feare The felicity of man conſiſteth not in hauing aboundance of tẽporall riches: a meane ſufficeth. It is truly miſery inough to liue vpon earth. How much more a man deſireth to be ſpirituall, ſo much the more diſtaſtfull is this preſent life vnto him: for he better perceaueth, and ſeeth more cleerly the defects of human corruption. To eate, to drinke, to watch, to ſleepe, to labour, to repoſe, and to be ſubiect to all other neceſſities of nature, is doubtleſſe a great miſery to a deuout mind, that would gladly be free & deliuered from all ſinne.

3. The inward man is much oppreſſed with theſe corporall neceſſities, whilſt he is in this world. And therfore the holy Prophet prayeth with great deuotion to be deliuered from them, ſaying: Deliuer me, O Lord, from my neceſſities. But woe be to them that know not their miſery, & much more to thẽ that loue this

this miſerable, & corruptible life. For ſome there be ſo dotingly affected vnto it, that although with labour and begging, they ſcarce get bread to eat, yet if they might liue heer alwaies, they would care but little for the Kingdome of heauen.

4. O ſenſleſſe creatures and infidels in hart, who lye buried ſo deep in earth, that they haue no taſt nor feeling, but of ſenſuall things! But miſerable wretches, they ſhall in the end feele, to their coſt, how vile, and of no eſteeme was that which they loued. The Saints of God & the deuout Seruants and friends of Chriſt reſpected little what pleaſed their naturall inclinations, or what flouriſhed in this life: but with their whole hopes & intētions they ſought after the riches of heauen. Their whole deſire was carried vp to thoſe euerlaſting treaſures, which are inuiſible: leaſt they might haue byn drawne to baſe affections, by the loue of viſible things. Looſe not thy hope to profit in ſpirituall matters: there is

yet

yet time: the heure is not yet paſt.

5. Why wilt thou deferre thy good purpoſe? Riſe vp in this very inſtant, and begin, and ſay: Now is the time to worke, the time to fight: now is it a fit time to amend my ſelfe. When any tribulation, or affliction doth befall thee, then is the time to merit. Thou muſt paſſe through fire and water before thou come to reſt. Vnleſſe thou vſe violence to thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt not ouercome thy euill inclinations. As long as we carry about with vs this frayle body of ours, we can neuer be without ſinne, nor liue without tediouſnes and griefe. We would gladly enioy quietnes, and be deliuered from al miſery: but for that we haue by ſinne loſt our innocēcy, we haue togeather with it loſt alſo our happines. And therfore it behoueth vs to haue patience, & to expect the mercy of God till this iniquity haue an end, and that which is mortall be ſwallowed vp of life.

6. O, how great is the frailty of man

man alwaies inclined to euill! To day thou confesſest thy ſinnes, and to morrow thou committeſt againe the ſame which thou didſt confeſſe. Now thou purpoſeſt to take heed, and within an houre thou doſt as if thou hadſt made no purpoſe at all. We may therefore with great reaſon humble our ſelues, and neuer admit any thought of our owne eſteeme, being ſo weak as we are, and ſubiect to euery change. Full ſoone (God knowes) is that loſt by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What will become of vs in the end, who do ſo timely begin to wax could? Woe be vnto vs, if we will now giue our ſelues to eaſe, as if all were already in peace and ſecurity; when as yet there ſcarce appeareth ſo much as any ſigne of true ſanctity in our conuerſation. It were needfull that we were taught good manners againe like Children, if ſo perhaps there might be ſome more hope of our amendment, & profit in ſpirit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the consideration of death.

THE houre of death will quickly ouertake thee, and therefore look how thou liueſt. To day a man is liuing, and to morrow he doth not appeare; & being once out of ſight, he is alſo quickly out of mind. O dulneſſe and hardneſſe of mans hart, who thinketh only on that he ſeeth, and foreſeeth not that which is to come! Thou ſhouldeſt alwaies ſo order thy thoughts and actions, as if this very day thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadſt a good conſcience, thou wouldeſt not much feare death. It is better to auoyd ſin then to fly death If thou be not prepared to day; how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow is vncertaine, and whether thou ſhalt ſee it or no, thou knoweſt not.

2. What doth it auaile vs to liue long, when we do ſo little amend?

mend? A long life doth not alwaies make vs better, nay rather it oftentimes heapeth vpon vs a greater load of sinnes. O that we had spent one day well in this world! Many do reckon the yeares of their conuersion, but full slender oftentimes is the fruit of amendment. If it be a dreadfull thing to dye, perhaps it will be more dangerous for thee to liue lõg. Blessed is he, that hath alwaies before his eyes the houre of his death; and disposeth himselfe daily thereunto. If thou hast at any time seene a man dye, thinke with thy self, that thou must one day passe the same way.

3. When it is morning, think that perhaps thou shall not liue vntill night: and when euening comes, do not dare to promise vnto thy self the next morning. Be alwaies ready and so order thy life, that death may neuer take thee vnprepared. Many dye suddainly: for the sonne of man will come, when we least thinke of it. When that last houre shall come,

thou wilt begin to think farre otherwiſe of thy life, and much lament, that thou haſt bene ſo ſlack and negligent.

4. O, how wiſe and happy is he, that now laboureth to be ſuch in his life, as he wiſheth to be found at the houre of his death? For the perfect contempt of the world, the feruent deſire to profit in vertue, the loue of diſcipline, the labour of pennance, the readineſſe of obedience, the forſaking of our ſelues, and the bearing patiently of all aduerſity for the loue of Chriſt, will giue great confidence of a happy end. Thou maiſt do much good whiles thou art well; but whē thou art ſick, what thou wilt be able to do, I know not. Few do grow better, and amend themſelues with ſickneſs; as alſo they that wander much abroad, ſeldome become holy.

5. Truſt not vpon thy friends or neighbours; neither do thou put off to future times, the care of thy ſoules health: for thou ſhalt ſooner be

be forgotten, then thou doſt imagine. It is better now to prouide in time, and do ſome good before thou goeſt, then to truſt in the help of others, when thou art gone. If thou haſt no care of thy ſelfe now when thou haſt time, who will be carefull for thee hereafter? The time which now thou haſt is very precious. Now are the daies of health. Now is the time acceptable. But alas, that thou ſpendeſt it ſo little to thy profit, in which thou mighteſt gaine eternall life? The time will come, when thou wilt deſire one day, or one houre to amend, & I cannot aſſure thee, that thou ſhalt obtaine it.

6. O my deareſt brother, from how great danger maiſt thou deliuer thy ſelfe? From how great feare maiſt thou be freed, if thou doſt now liue fearfull, and carefull of thy death. Labour to liue in ſuch ſort, that at the houre of death thou maiſt rather reioyce then feare. Learne now to dye to the world, that thou maiſt then begin to liue with Chriſt.

Learne now to contemne all earthly things, that thou maist then freely go to Christ. Chastice now thy body with pennance, that thou maist then haue assured confidence.

7. Ah foole, why dost thou thinke thou shalt liue long, being not certaine of so much as one day. How many haue byn deceaued, and taken out of this world on a suddaine, when they least expected it! How often hast thou heard, how such a one was suddainely slaine, another was drowned, another falling from some high place brake his neck, another dyed at his meate, another when he was playing. one came to his end by fire, another by sword, another by plague, another dyed by the hands of theeues. So as death is the end of all, and the life of man passeth away like a shaddow.

8. Who will remember thee? and who will pray for thee after thy death? Do now, beloued brother, do now what thou canst, for thou knowest not how soone thou shalt dye,

dye, nor what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilst thou hast time, heap togeather eternall riches. Thinke on nothing, but on the health of thy soule. Haue care only on that which belongeth to God. Make the Saints of God thy friends by honouring them, and imitating their vertues, that when thou departest this life, they may receaue thee into their euerlasting dwellings.

9. Esteeme thy selfe as a pilgrime, and stranger vpon earth, and as one to whom the affaires of this world do nothing appertaine. Keep thy hart free, and lifted vp to God: for thou hast not heere any permanent Citty. Send thither thy prayers dayly with sighes, and teares; that thy soule may deserue to passe with much happines to our Lord after death.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Iudgment, and the punishment of sinne.

IN all things consider the end, and how thou wilt be able to stand before that seuere Iudge; frō whom nothing can be hidden, and is not appeased with guifts, nor admitteth excuses, but iudgeth according to iustice. O most wretched and foolish sinner, that feareſt somtimes the countenance of an angry man; what answere wilt thou make to God, to whome all thy wickednes is knowne? Why prouideſt thou not for thy self against that rigorous day of iudgment, in which no man can be excused, or defended by another, but euery one will be burden inough to himselfe? Now thy pains are profitable, thy teares acceptable, thy cries are heard, thy sorrow satisfieth for thy sinnes, and purgeth thy soule.

2. The patient man hath a great and

and healthfull purgatory, who receauing iniuries, grieueth more for the others malice, then for his owne wrongs; prayeth willingly for his aduersaries, and from his hart forgiueth their offences; delayeth not to aske forgiuenes of whomsoeuer he hath offended; is sooner moued to compassion then to anger; vseth often violence to himselfe: and laboureth with his whole force to subdue the flesh in all things to the spirit. It is better to purge our sins, and vices now, then to reserue them for purgatory. Verily the inordinate loue we beare to our selues deceaueth vs.

3. What other thing shall that fire feed on, but thy sinnes? How much the more thou sparest thy self now, and followest the desires of thy corrupt nature: so much the more grieuously shalt thou be punished hereafter. & so much the more matterdost thou keep for that purging fire. In the selfe same wherin a man hath sinned, shall he be more

grieuously punished. There shall the slouthfull be pricked forwardes, with burning goads There shall the Gluttons be tormented with insatiable hunger and thirst. There shall the lasciuious & the louers of pleasures be couered ouer with burning pitch and brimstone. The enuious like raging dogs, shall there howle for griefe.

4. There no vice, that shall not haue his proper tormẽt. The proud shall be full of all sham- and confusion. The couetous shall be in miserable wãt. One houre of paine there shall be more sharpe, then a hundred yeares of most hard pennance heer. There is no rest there, nor comfort for the damned. Heere yet somtimes our labours cease, & we enioy the comfort of our friends. Be now solicitous & sorrowfull for thy sinnes; that in the day of iudgment thou maist be secure in the company of the blessed soules. For then shall the iust stand in great constancy, against those that afflicted & oppressed thẽ.

Then

Then ſhall he ſtand to iudge, who now doth humbly ſubmit himſelfe to the iudgment of men. Then ſhall the poore and humble haue great confidence, & the proud ſhall be cō-paſſed about on all ſides with feare.

5. Then will it appeare, that he was wiſe in this world, who had heere learned to be as a foole & diſpiſed for Chriſt. Then ſhall affliction patiently ſuffered delight vs, and iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth. Then ſhall the deuout reioyce, and the irreligious mourne. Then ſhall the chaſticed fleſh more floriſh, then if it had byn alwaies nouriſhed in delights. Then ſhall the poore garment ſhine, & the precious robes appeare contemptible. Then ſhall the meane cottage be more commended, then the ſumptuous pallace. Then will conſtāt patience more auaile vs, then all earthly power. Then will ſimple obedience be more eſteemed, then all worldly wiſdome.

6. Then ſhall a good and pure conſcience yield vs more comfort,

then the profound learning of Philosophy Then shall the contempt of riches weigh more thē all the worldlings treasures. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast praied deuoutly, then that thou hast fared daintily. Thē wilt thou be more ioyful that thou hast obserued silēce, then that thou hast talked much. Then will good works appeare of much more esteeme, thē faire words. Then a strict life and hard pennance will be more pleasing, then all earthly delights. Accustome thy selfe now to suffer a little, that thou maist then be deliuered from more grieuous paines. Proue heere first what thou canst endure heerafter. If now thou canst beare so little, how wilt thou be able to endure euerlasting torments? If now a little suffering make thee so impatient, what will hell fire do heerafter? Assure thy selfe, thou canst not haue two Paradises. It is impossible for thee to enioy delights heere in this world, and raigne heerafter with Christ in heauen.

7. If

7. If thou hadst hitherto liued alwaies in honors and delights; what would it auaile thee, if thou shouldest presently dy? All is vanity but to loue God, and only to serue him. And he that loueth God with his whole hart, needeth to feare neither death, punishment, iudgment, nor hell: for perfect loue giues secure accesse to God. But he that delighteth alwaies in sinne, what wōder though he alwaies feare death, and be terrified with the thought of Iudgment. Yet it is good, that if loue be not of force to withhould thee from sinne, that at least the feare of hell may restrayne thee. And he that layeth aside the feare of God, can neuer continue long in good state, but falleth quickly into the snares of the diuell.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the feruent amendment of our whole life.

BE watchfull and diligent in the ſeruice of God, and often think with thy ſelfe wherefore thou cameſt, and why thou didſt leaue the world. Was it not that thou mighteſt liue to God, and become a ſpirituall man? Go on therfore with courage: thou ſhalt ſhortly receaue the reward of thy labours, and there ſhall be no more feare nor ſorrow in the confines of thy habitation. Thou muſt labour heer a while: thou ſhalt afterwards haue great reſt; yea euerlaſting ioy. If thou continueſt faithfull and diligent in ſeruing of God, do not doubt but God will be faithfull & liberal in giuing thee reward. Thou oughteſt to haue a good hope of getting the victory, but thou muſt not make thy ſelfe aſſured thereof, leaſt thou wax negligent, or be puf-

fed

fed vp with pride.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wauering betweene feare and hope, did once, being oppreſſed with griefe, proſtrate himſelf in a Church in prayer before an Altar, and ſayd within himſelfe: O, if I knew that I ſhould yet perſeuer! he preſently heard as it were a voice from God, which ſaid: What if thou diddeſt know it, what wouldſt thou do? Do now what thou wouldeſt do then, & thou ſhalt be ſecure. And being herewith comforted, & ſtrengthned in mind, he committed himſelfe wholy to the will of God, and that noyſome anxiety ceaſed: neither had he any mind to ſearch curiouſly any further, to know what ſhould befall him: but rather laboured to vnderſtand what was the perfect, and acceptable will of God, for the beginning & accompliſhing of euery good worke.

3. Hope in our Lord, and do good, ſaith the Prophet, and inhabit

bit the land, and thou ſhalt be fed in the riches therof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that ſpirituall good, and the diligent amendment of their liues: the horror of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they aboue others profit moſt in vertue, that endeauour moſt to ouercome thoſe things, which are grieuous, and cõtrary vnto them. For there a man profiteth more, and deſerueth greater grace, where he more ouercometh & mortifieth himſelfe in ſpirit.

4. But all men haue not alike to ouercome and mortify: yet he that is zealous and diligent, though he haue more paſſions, ſhall profit more in vertue, then another that is of a more temperate diſpoſition, if he be leſſe feruent in the purſuite of vertue. Two things chiefely help to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our ſelues violently from that to which nature is viciouſly inclined and to labour earneſtly for that vertue, which we moſt want. Be careful

ful alſo to auoid with great diligẽce, thoſe things in thy ſelfe, which do moſt diſpleaſe thee in others.

5. Gather ſome profit to thy ſoule out of euery occaſion, and wherſoeuer thou be: ſo as if thou ſeeſt or heareſt any good, ſtir vp thy ſelfe to the imitation thereof. But if thou ſeeſt any thing worthy of reproofe, beware thou do not the ſame. And if at any time thou haſt done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thine eye obſerueth others, ſo art thou alſo noted againe by others. O, how ſweet and comfortable a thing it is, to ſee the ſeruants of Chriſt feruent and deuout, endued with vertuous and decent manners! And on the contrary, how pittifull and grieuous a thing it is, to ſee them that liue in a diſſolute and diſordered ſort, not applying themſelues to that, for which they were called! O, how great domage & great danger is it, to neglect the good purpoſes of their vocation, and to buſy themſelues in that which appertaineth not

not vnto them, nor is committed to their care!

6. Be mindfull of the purpose thou hast made, and haue alwaies before the eyes of thy soule, the picture of thy Sauiour crucifyed. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking vpon the life of Christ, seing thou hast so slackly endeauoured to conforme thy selfe vnto him, though thou hast walked a long time in the way of the seruice of God. A religious person that exerciseth himselfe seriously, and deuoutly in the most holy life, and passion of our Lord, shall there aboundantly find whatsoeuer is necessary, and profitable for him; neither shall he need to seeke any thing elswhere, but only in Iesus. O, if Iesus crucifyed would come into our harts, how quickly and fully should we be instructed in all truth!

7. A feruent religious person taketh, and beareth all well that is commanded him: but he that is negligent and cold, hath tribulation vpon

vpon tribulation, and on all ſides is afflicted: for he is void of inward conſolation, & is forbidden to ſeek externall comforts. A religious perſon that liueth not according to diſcipline, is in great danger of the ruine of his ſoule. He that ſeeketh liberty and eaſe, ſhall euer liue in diſquiet: for one thing or other will alwaies diſpleaſe him.

8. How do ſo many other religious perſons, who liue vnder the ſtrict rule of Monaſticall diſcipline? They ſeldome go abroad, they liue retiredly, they feed meanly, they are cloathed courſely, they labour much, ſpeak little, watch long, riſe early, ſpend much time in prayer, read often, and keep themſelues in all kind of diſcipline. Conſider the Carthuſians, Ciſtercians, and the Religious men and women of diuers Orders, how they riſe euery night to ſing praiſes vnto God. And how vnſeemly then it is for thee to be ſlouthfull in ſo holy a worke, when as ſo great multitudes of religious

gious persons do begin to glorify God.

9. O, that we had nothing els to do, but alwaies with our mouth, and whole hart to praise our Lord God! O, that thou mightest neuer haue need to eate, nor drinke, nor sleepe, but mightest alwaies praise God, and only imploy thy selfe in the exercises of spirit: thou shouldst then be much more happy, then now thou art, when for so many necessities, thou art constrained to serue thy body. Would God these necessities were not at all, but only the spirituall refections of the soule, which (alas) we taste of too seldome.

10. When a man commeth to that estate, that he seeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentmēt & delight in God. Then shall he be contented with whatsoeuer doth befall him in this world. Then shall he neither reioyce in great matters, nor be sorrowfull for small, but with great

great integrity and confidence commit himselfe to God; who shall be vnto him all in all: to whom nothing doth perish, nor dy, but all things do liue vnto him, and serue him at a beck without delay.

11. Remember alwaies the end, and how that time lost neuer returnes. Without care and diligence thou shalt neuer get vertues. If thou beginnest to wax could, it will be euill with thee: but if thou giue thy selfe to feruour of spirit, thou shalt find much peace, and feele lesse labour, through the assistance of Gods grace, and loue of vertue. The feruent and diligent man is ready, and prepared for all things. It is harder to resist vices and passions, then to toile in bodily labours. He that auoideth not small faults, by little and little falleth into greater. Thou wilt alwaies reioyce in the euening, if thou spend the day profitably. Be watchfull ouer thy selfe, stir vp thy selfe, warne thy selfe, and what-

whatſoeuer becomes of others, neglect not thy ſelfe. The greater violence thou vſeſt againſt thy ſelfe, the more thou ſhalt profit.

The end of the firſt Booke.

OF

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE SECOND BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

Of ſpirituall converſation.

THE Kingdome of God is within you, ſayth our Lord. Turne thee with thy whole hart vnto our Lord, and forſake this miſerable world,

world, and thy ſoule ſhall find reſt. Learne to deſpiſe exteriour things, & to giue thy ſelf to the interiour, & thou ſhalt perceaue the Kingdom of God to come into thee. For the kingdome of God is peace, & ioy in the holy Ghoſt, which is not giuen to the wicked. Chriſt will come into thee, and ſhew thee his diuine comfort, if thou prepare for him a worthy manſion within thee. All his glory & beauty is within, and there he pleaſeth himſelfe. The inward man he often viſits, and hath with him ſweet diſcourſes, pleaſant comfort, much peace, wonderfull familiarity.

2. O faithfull ſoule, make ready thy hart for this bridegrome, that he may vouchſafe to come vnto thee, and dwell within thee. For he ſaith: If any loue me, he wil keep my word, and we will come vnto him, and will make our aboad with him. Giue therfore vnto Chriſt a place in thy hart, and deny entrance to all others. When thou haſt Chriſt, thou

thou art rich, and he wil ſuffice thee. He will be thy faithfull and prouident helper in all things, ſo as thou ſhalt not need to truſt in men. For men are ſoone changed, and quickly deceyued: but Chriſt remaineth foreuer, and ſtandeth firmely vnto the end.

3. There is little truſt to be put in a fraile and mortall man, though he be profitable & deare vnto thee: neither oughteſt thou much to be grieued, if ſomtimes he croſſe, and contradict thee. They that to day take thy part, to morrow may be againſt thee; and ſo on the contrary, they often turne like vnto the wind. Put all thy truſt in God, and feare and loue him: He will anſwere for thee, and do in al things what is beſt. Thou haſt not heere a dwelling Citty: and wherſoeuer thou be, thou art a ſtranger and pilgrime: neither ſhalt thou euer haue reſt, vnleſſe thou be perfectly vnited vnto Chriſt.

4. Why doſt thou linger, and make

make delaies heere, ſince this is not the place of thy reſt? In heauē ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as it were in the way. All things paſſe away, and thou togeather with them. Beware thou cleaue not vnto them, leaſt thou be enthralled; and ſo doeſt periſh. Let thy thought be on the higheſt, and thy prayer directed vnto Chriſt without ceaſing. If thou canſt not contemplate high and heauenly things, reſt thy ſelfe in the paſſion of Chriſt, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his ſacred body. For if thou fly deuoutly vnto his holy wounds, and to the precious markes of his paſſion, thou ſhalt feele great comfort in tribulation: neither wilt thou much care for being deſpiſed of men, and wilt eaſily beare the wordes of ſlaunderous tongues

5. Chriſt was alſo in the world deſpiſed, and in great neceſſity: forſaken by his acquaintance, & friends in the middeſt of ſlaunders. Chriſt would

would suffer, and be contemned; & dareſt thou complaine? Chriſt had aduerſaries and backbiters; and wilt thou haue all men thy friends & benefactours? For what ſhall thy patience be crowned, if no aduerſity happen vnto thee? If thou wilt ſuffer no aduerſity, how wilt thou be the friend of Chriſt? Suffer with Chriſt, & for Chriſt, if thou deſire to raigne with Chriſt.

6. If thou haddeſt once perfectly entred into the hart of Ieſus, and taſted a little of his burning loue: then wouldeſt thou not weigh thy owne commodity or diſcommodity, but wouldeſt rather reioyce at ſlaunders, when they ſhould chance to be caſt vpon thee: for the loue of Ieſus maketh a man to deſpiſe himſelfe. A louer of Ieſus, & of truth, & a true ſpirituall perſon, and free from inordinate affections, can freely turne himſelfe vnto God, and lift himſelfe aboue himſelfe in ſpirit, and with great ioy of his ſoule reſt in God.

7. He that iudgeth of all things

as they are, and not as they are ſaid, and eſteemed to be, is truly wiſe, and taught rather by God then men. He that can liue ſpiritually, & make ſmall reckoning of outward things: neither requireth places, nor attendeth times for performing of deuout exerciſes. A ſpiritual mā quickly recollecteth himſelfe: becauſe he neuer yieldeth ouer himſelfe wholy to outward things. He is not hindred by outward labour or buſines, which may be neceſſary for the time, but as things fall out, ſo he frameth himſelfe vnto them. He that hath well ordered and diſpoſed all things within, careth little for the vaine inuentions, and peruerſe inclinations of men. So much is a man hindred and diſtracted, how much he draweth matters vnto himſelfe

8. If all went well with thee, and thou haddſt thy hart well purged, all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But many things diſpleaſe, and often trouble thee, becauſe thou art not yet perfectly dead

dead vnto thy selfe, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defileth and intangleth the hart of man, as the impure loue to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort; thou wilt be able to contemplate the things of heauen, and often receiue internall ioy.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

RESPECT not much who is with thee, or who is against thee. Endeauour, and take care, that God may be for thee in euery thing thou doest. Haue a good conscience, and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hould thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord wil help thee. He knoweth the time, and manner how to deliuer thee, and therfore thou oughtest to resigne thy selfe vnto him. It belongs to God

to help, and to deliuer from all ſhame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himſelfe for his faults, then he eaſily pacifieth others, and quickly ſatisfieth thoſe that are offended with him. God protecteth and deliuereth the humble: he loueth and comforteth the humble: vnto the humble man he inclineth himſelfe: vnto the humble he giueth great grace; and after his humiliation, he raiſeth him vnto glory. Vnto the humble he reuealeth his ſecrets, and ſweetly draweth and inuiteth him vnto himſelf. The humble when he hath receaued confuſion, is in peace, for that he reſteth in God, and relieth not on the world. Do not thinke that thou haſt profited any thing, vnleſſe thou eſteeme thy ſelf inferiour to all.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

FIRST keep thy ſelfe in peace, and then maiſt thou pacify others. A peaceable man doth more good, then he that is well learned: A paſſionate man turneth good into euill, and eaſily belieueth the worſt. A good peaceable man turneth all things into good. He that is well in peace, is not ſuſpitious of any. But he that is diſcontented, & troubled, is toſſed with diuers ſuſpitions: he is nether quiet himſelf, nor ſuffereth others to be quiet. He often ſpeaketh that which he ought not to ſpeake; and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to do. He conſidereth what others are bound to do: & neglecteth that which he is bound to himſelfe. Firſt therefore haue a carefull zeale ouer thy ſelfe, & then thou maiſt iuſtly ſhew thy ſelfe zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knoweſt well how to excuſe and colour thine owne deeds, and thou wilt not receaue the excuſes of others. It were more meet, that thou dideſt accuſe thy ſelf, and excuſedſt thy brother. If thou wilt be borne withall, beare alſo with another. Behould how far off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moued with indignation, but only againſt himſelfe. It is no great matter to conuerſe with the good, & thoſe that are of a geatle diſpoſition, for that is naturally pleaſing to all, and euery one willingly enioyeth peace, and loueth thoſe beſt that agree with him. But to be able to liue peaceably with the vnquiet, & peruerſe minds, or with the diſorderly, or ſuch as contradict vs, is a great grace, and very commendable.

3. Some there are, that keep themſelues in peace, and are in peace alſo with others. And there are ſome, that neither are in peace them-

themselues, nor suffer others to be in peace: they are troublesome to others, but alwaies more troublesome to themselues. And others there are that keep themselues in peace, and labour to bring others vnto peace. Our whole peace in this miserable life, consisteth rather in humble suffering, then in not feeling aduersities. He that can best tell how to suffer, will best keep himselfe in peace. He is a conquerour of himselfe, a Lord of the world, friend of Christ, and heyre of heauen.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure mind, and vpright intention.

WITH two wings man is lifted vp from earthly vanities, that is, with simplicity, & purity. Simplicity ought to he in our intention. Purity in our affection. Simplicity fixeth the eyes of the soule in God. Purity apprehendeth and tasteth his

ſweetnes. No good actiõ will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend and ſeek nothing els but the will of God, and the profit of thy neigbour, thou ſhalt enioy internall liberty. If thy hart were ſincere & vpright, thẽ euery creature would be vnto thee a looking glaſſe of life, and a booke of holy doctrine. There is no creature ſo little and abiect, that repreſenteth not the goodnes of God.

2. If in thine owne hart thou wert good and pure, then thou wouldeſt be able to ſee and vnderſtand all things without any impediment. A pure hart penetrateth heauen, and pierceth the depth of hell. Such as euery one is inwardly: ſo he iudgeth outwardly. If there be ioy in the world, ſurely a man of a pure hart poſſeſſeth it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an euill conſcience feels it. As iron put into the fire leeſeth his ruſt, and becometh bright like fire. ſo he that wholy turning himſelfe vnto God,

God, becommeth feruent, & is changed into a new man.

3. When one beginneth to wax cold: then he is afraid of a small labour, and willingly receaueth externall comfort. But when he once beginneth to ouercome himselfe perfectly, and to walke manfully in the way of God: then he esteemeth those things to be light, which before seemed grieuous vnto him.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of ones selfe.

WE cannot trust much to our selues, for that grace oftentimes and vnderstāding is wanting. There is but little light in vs, & that which we haue, we quickly loose by our negligence. And oftentimes we do not perceaue our own inward blindnes. We often do euil, and excuse it worse. We are somtimes moued with passion, and we thinke it to be

zeale. We reprehend ſmall things in others, & paſſe ouer greater matters in our ſelues. We quickly feele, and weigh what we ſuffer at the hands of others: but we mind not what others ſuffer from vs. He that doth well & deeply conſider his own works, will find little cauſe to iudge hardly of another.

2. A ſpirituall man preferreth the care of himſelfe, before all other cares. And he that diligently attendeth vnto himſelfe, doth ſeldome ſpeake much of others. Thou wilt neuer be recollected and deuout, vnleſſe thou paſſe ouer other mens matters with ſilence, and looke eſpecially to thy ſelfe. If thou attend wholy vnto God and thy ſelfe, thou wilt be little moued with whatſoeuer thou ſeeſt abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy ſelfe? And when thou haſt runne ouer all, what haſt thou profited, if thou doeſt neglect thy ſelfe? If thou deſireſt peace of mind and true vnion, thou muſt eſteeme little of all earthly

earthly things, and looke only to thy ſelfe.

3. Thou ſhalt therfore profit much, if thou keepe thy ſelfe free from all temporall cares. Thou ſhalt hinder thy ſelfe greatly, if thou eſteeme any thing of this world. Let nothing be great vnto thee, nothing high, nothing gratefull, nothing acceptable, but only God himſelfe purely, or that which is for God. Eſteeme all comfort vaine which thou receaueſt from any creature. A ſoule that loueth God, deſpiſeth all things that be inferiour vnto God. God alone is euerlaſting, and of infinite greatnes, filling all creatures: the comfort of the ſoule, and the true ioy of the hart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the comfort of a good Conſcience.

THE glory of a good man, is the teſtimony of a good conſcience.

Haue a good conſcience, & thou ſhalt euer haue ioy. A good conſcience is able to beare much, & is cheerefull in aduerſities. An euill conſcience is alwaies fearefull and vnquiet. Thou ſhalt reſt ſweetly, if thy hart doth not reprehend thee. Do thou neuer reioyce, but when thou haſt done well. Sinners haue neuer true mirth, nor feele inward peace: becauſe there is no peace to the impious, ſaith our Lord. And if they ſhould ſay: We are in peace, no euill ſhall fall vpon vs, and who ſhall dare to hurt vs? belieue them not: for vpon a ſuddaine will ariſe the wrath of God, and their deeds ſhall be turned into nothing, and their conceipts ſhall periſh.

2. To glory in tribulation is no hard thing for him that loueth. For to glory ſo, is to glory in the Croſſe of our Lord. That glory is ſhort, which is giuen and receaued from men. Sorrow alwaies accompanieth the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their conſciences,

and

and not in the tongues of men. The gladnes of the iuſt is of God, and in God: and their ioy is of the truth. He that deſireth true and euerlaſting glory, careth not for that which paſſeth away with time. And he that ſeeketh temporall glory, or contemneth it not from his hart, ſhewes himſelfe but little to eſteeme of the glory of heauen. He enioyeth great tranquillity and peace of mind, that careth neither for the prayſes, nor diſpraiſes of men.

3. He will eaſily be content and pacified, whoſe conſcience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him: nor the more abiect though thou diſpraiſe him. What thou art, that thou art: neither canſt thou be truly ſayd to be greater, then what thou art in the ſight of God. If thou conſider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men ſay of thee. Man ſeeth in the face, but God looketh into the hart. Man conſidereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intentions.

To do alwaies well, and to esteeme little of himselfe, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a signe of great purity, and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward witnes for himselfe, doth shew that he hath wholy committed himselfe vnto God. For not he, that commendeth himselfe, the same is approued (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walke inwardly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spirituall man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the loue of IESVS aboue all thinges.

BLESSED is he that vnderstandeth what it is to loue Iesus, and to despise himselfe for Iesus. Thou oughtest to leaue thy beloued, for thy

thy beloued; for that Iesus will be beloued alone aboue all things. The loue of things created is deceiptfull and vnconstant: the loue of Iesus is faithfull and constant. He that cleaueth vnto creaturs shal fall with that which is subiect to fall. He that imbraceth Iesus shall stand firmely for euer. Loue him, and keep him for thy friend, who when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be left of men, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Liue and dye with Iesus; & commit thy selfe vnto his trust, who when all faile, can alone help thee. Thy beloued is of that nature, that he will none of that which appertaineth to others: but will haue thy hart alone, and sit like a King in his owne throne. If thou couldest purge thy selfe perfectly of all creatures, Iesus would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoeuer thou putteſt in men, out of Iesus, is all no better then lost. Trust not, nor rely vpon a reed

a reed full of wind: for that all flesh is as hay, and all the glory therof shall wither away, as the flower of the field.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceaued, if thou looke only to the outward shew of men. And if in them thou seekest thy comfort and profit: thou shalt often feele losse. If thou seekest Iesus in all things, thou shalt surely find Iesus. But if thou seekest thy selfe, thou shalt also find thy selfe, but to thy owne harme. For man doth more hurt himselfe, if he seeke not Iesus, then the whole world, and all his aduersaries could annoy him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of familiar conuersation with IESVS.

WHEN Iesus is present, all is well, and nothing seemeth difficult: but when Iesus is absent, euery thing is hard. When Iesus spea-

ſpeaketh not inwardly vnto vs, our comfort is nothing worth: but if Ieſus ſpeake but one world, we feele much conſolation. Did not Mary Magdalen preſently riſe from the place where ſhe wept, when Martha ſaid vnto her: Thy maiſter is heere, and calleth thee? Happy is the houre when Ieſus calleth from teares to ſpirituall ioy. How dry and hard art thou without Ieſus? How fooliſh and vaine, if thou deſire any thing out of Ieſus? Is not this a greater loſſe, then if thou ſhouldeſt looſe the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without Ieſus? To be without Ieſus is a grieuous hell: and to be with Ieſus is a ſweete Paradiſe. If Ieſus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee. He that findeth Ieſus, findeth a good treaſure: yea a good aboue all goods And he that leeſeth Ieſus leeſeth to much, and more then the whole world. He is moſt poore that liueth without Ieſus: and he moſt rich that is well with Ieſus.

3. It is

3. It is a great skill to know how to conuerse with Iesus, and a great wisdome to know how to keep Iesus. Be humble, and peaceable, & Iesus will be with thee. Be deuout and quiet, and Iesus will stay with thee. Thou maist driue away Iesus & loose his grace, if thou giuest thy selfe to outward things. And if thou shouldest driue him from thee, and leese him, vnto whom wilt thou fly, and what friend wilt thou then seeke? Without a friend thou canst not well liue: and if Iesus be not aboue all a friend vnto thee; thou shalt be tootoo sorrowfull and desolate. Thou doest therefore foolishly, if thou doest trust or reioyce in any other. It is better for thee to haue all the world against thee, then Iesus offended with thee. Amongst all things therfore that be deare vnto thee, let Iesus alone be thy chiefest beloued.

4. Loue all for Iesus, but Iesus for himselfe. Iesus Christ alone is especially to be beloued; who alone

is

is found to be good, and faithfull aboue all friends. For him, & in him, let aſwell friends as foes be deare vnto thee: and all theſe are to be prayed for, that all may know and loue him. Neuer deſire to be ſingularly commended or beloued, for that appertaineth only vnto God, who hath none like vnto himſelfe. Neither do thou deſire that the hart of any ſhould be ſet on thee; nor do thou ſet thy hart on the loue of any: but let Ieſus be in thee, and in euery vertuous and good man.

5. Be pure and free within, and intangle not thy hart with any creature. Thou oughteſt to be as it were naked, & carry a pure hart to God, if thou wilt conſider, and proue, & ſee how ſweet our Lord is. And truly, vnleſſe thou be preuented, and drawne by his grace, thou ſhalt neuer attaine to that happines, to forſake and caſt away all, that thou alone maiſt be vnited to him alone. For when the grace of God commeth vnto a man, then he is ſtrong, and nothing

nothing is hard vnto him. And whē it goeth away, he is poore & weake, and as it were left vnto the will of whomsoeuer will afflict him. In this thou oughtest not to be deiected, nor despaire; but to resigne thy selfe with all indifferency vnto the will of God, and to beare all things that befall thee for the glory of Christ: for after winter followeth summer: after night commeth day, and after a tempest, faire weather.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise humane comfort, when we haue diuine. It is much and very much, to be able to want both humane and diuine comfort: and for the honour and glory of God, to be willing to endure desolation of hart; and to seeke himselfe in nothing, nor to regard his owne merit. What great matter is it, if thou be cheerfull and de-

deuout at the comming of heauenly grace? This houre is wished for of all men. He rideth easily whome the grace of God carrieth. And what meruaile, if he feele not his burden who is borne vp by the Almighty, and led by the greatest guide?

2. We are alwaies willing to haue something for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off, and forsake himself. The holy martyr S. Laurence ouercame the world with his Prelate: because he despised whatsoeuer seemed delightsome in the world: and for the loue of Christ he patiently suffered the high Priest of God S. Syxtus to be taken from him, whome he most loued. He ouercame therefore the loue of man by the loue of the Creator; and he rather chose the diuine pleasure, then humane comfort. See thou also learne to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloued friend for the loue of God. Be not grieued when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length must be

be separated one from another.

3. A man must fight long, and with a constant mind, before he get the victory, and be able to place his whole hart in God. When a man confideth in himselfe, he easily slideth vnto humane comforts. But a true louer of Christ, and a diligent follower of vertue, giueth not himselfe to such solace, nor seeketh sensible sweetnes: but rather forcible exercises, and to sustaine hard labours for Christ.

4. When therfore spirituall comfort is giuen thee from God, receaue it thankefully: but know that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine. Be not puffed vp, ioy not too much, neither do thou presume vainely: but be rather the more humble for that grace, and more wary and fearefull in all thy actions: for that houre wil passe away and temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken from thee, despaire not presently; but with humility and patience attend the heauenly

ly visitation: for God is able againe to giue thee greater consolatiō. This is not new, nor strange vnto them, that haue experience in the way of God: for in the great Saints and ancient Prophets, there was oftentimes such kind of alteration.

5. For which cause one when he had grace, said: I said in my plenty, I will not be moued euerlastingly. But when this was gone from him, he addeth what he found in himself, saying: Thou turnedst thy face from me, and I became troubled. Yet doth he not despaire in the middest of these changes, but more earnestly prayeth vnto our Lord, and saith: Vnto thee (o Lord) I will cry, and I will pray vnto my God. Lastly he receaueth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying: Our Lord hath heard me, and taken pitty on me: our Lord is become my helper. But wherein? Thou hast turned (saith he) my sorrow into ioy, and thou hast compassed me about with gladnes. If great

great Saints haue byn so dealt with-all, we that are poore and weake ought not to despaire, if we be sometimes feruent, and sometimes cold: for the spirit commeth and goeth, according to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed Iob saith: Thou visitest him early in the morning, and suddainly thou prouest him.

6. Whereupon therfore can I hope, or wherin ought I to trust, but in the great mercy of God aloue, and in the only hope of heauenly grace? For whether I enioy the presence of good men, or deuout brethren, or faithfull friends, or holy bookes, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymnes. all these help little, and haue little sauour, when grace forsaketh me, and I remaine left in my owne pouerty. At such a tyme there is no better remedy then patience, and the resigning of my selfe vnto the will God.

7. I neuer found any so religious and deuout, that hath not had som-

somtimes a withdrawing of grace, or felt not a decreaſe of feruour. There was neuer Saint ſo highly rapt, and illuminated, who firſt or laſt was not tempted. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not byn exerciſed with ſome tribulation for Gods ſake. For tentation going before, is wont to be a ſigne of enſuing comfort. And vnto thoſe that are proued by tentations, heauenly comfort is promiſed. He that ſhall ouercome, ſaith he, I will giue him to eate of the wood of life.

8. But diuine comfort is giuen, that a man may be ſtronger to beare aduerſities. There followeth alſo tentation, leaſt we ſhould wax proud of that good. The diuell ſleepeth not, neither is our fleſh as yet dead: therfore ceaſe not to prepare thy ſelf to the battaile: for on thy right hand, and on thy left are enemies that neuer reſt.

CHAP. X.

Of thankefulneſſe for the Grace of God.

WHy ſeekeſt thou reſt, ſince thou art borne to labour? Diſpoſe thy ſelfe to patience, rather then to comforts: and to the bearing of the Croſſe, rather then to gladnes. What ſecular perſon is there, that would not willingly receaue ſpirituall ioy and comfort, if he could alwaies haue it? Spirituall comforts exceed al the delights of the world, and all the pleaſures of the fleſh. All worldly delights are either vaine, or vncleane: but ſpiritual delights are only pleaſant and honeſt, produced by vertues, and infuſed by God into pure harts. But no man can alwaies enioy theſe diuine comforts, according to his deſire: for the time of temptation it not long away.

2. Falſe freedome of mind, and great truſt of our ſelues, is very contrary

trary to heauenly visitations. God doth well in giuing grace: but man doth euill in not returning it againe wholy vnto God, with thankesgiuing. And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in vs, becauſe we are vngratefull to the giuer: and returne them not wholy to the head-fountaine. For grace is euer due to him that is thankefull: and from the proud shall be taken that which is wont to be giuen to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation that taketh from me compunction: nor that contemplation which breedeth a haughty mind. For all that is high, is not holy: nor all that is sweet, good: nor euery desire, pure: nor euery thing that is deare vnto vs, is gratefull to God. I do willingly accept of that grace, wherby I may euer become more humble and fearefull, and be made more ready and able to forsake my selfe. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing therof; will not dare to attribute any

good to himselfe: but will rather acknowledge himselfe poore, and naked. Giue vnto God that which is Gods; and ascribe vnto thy selfe that which is thine owne: that is, giue thankes vnto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but only sinne, and the punishment due thereunto.

4. Content thy selfe, and desire alwaies the meanest and lowest things, and the highest shall the giuen thee: for the highest stand not without the lowest. The highest Saints before God, are the least in their owne iudgments. And how much the more glorious, so much the humbler within themselues. Those that are full of truth, and heauenly glory, are not desirous of the vaine glory of this world. Those that are firmely setled and grounded in God, can no way be proud. And they that ascribe all vnto God, what good soeuer they haue receaued, seek not glory one of another: but would haue that glory which is from God alone

alone: and desire aboue all things to praise God in himselfe, and in all the Saints, and alwaies tend vnto the same.

5. Be therfore gratefull for the least gift, and thou shalt be made worthy to receaue greater. Let the least be vnto thee also as the greatest: and the most contemptible as an especiall gift. If thou consider the worth of the giuer, no gift will seeme little, or of meane esteeme. For it is not little that is giuen by the soueraigne Maiesty of God. Yea if he should giue punishment and stripes, it ought to be gratefull, for that he doth is alwaies for our saluation, whatsoeuer he permitteth to happē vnto vs. He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankfull for the grace giuen, and patient for the taking away therof. Let him pray that it may returne. Let him be wary and humble, least he leese it.

CHAP. XI.

How few the louers of the Crosse of Christ are.

IESVS hath now many louers of his heauenly kingdome, but few bearers of his Crosse. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence. All desire to reioyce with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Iesus vnto the breaking of bread: but few to the drinking of the Chalice of his passion. Many reuerence his miracles, few follow the ignominy of his Crosse. Many loue Iesus, as long as aduersities happen not. Many praise and blesse him, as long as they receaue any comfort from him. But if Iesus hide himself, and leaue them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much deiection of mind.

2. But

2. But they that loue Ieſus for Ieſus, and not for ſome comfort of their owne, bleſſe him in all tribulation and anguiſh of hart, as well as in the greateſt cõfort. And although he ſhould neuer giue them comfort, they notwithſtanding would euer prayſe him, and alwaies giue him thankes.

3. O how powerfull is the pure loue of Ieſus, which is mixed with no ſelfe loue nor proper intereſt! Are they not all to be called hirelings, that euer ſeeke cõforts? Do they not ſhew themſelues to be rather louers of themſelues, then of Chriſt, that alwaies thinke of their commodity & gaine? Where may one be found that will ſerue God, without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one ſo ſpirituall, that is free from the loue of all earthly things. For where is any that is indeed poore in ſpirit, and free from all affection of creatures. Far hence, and from the end of the world is his price. If a man

ſhould giue all his wealth, yet is it nothing. And if he ſhould do great pennance, yet is it little. And if he ſhould attaine to all knowledg, he is yet far off. And if he ſhould haue great vertue, and very feruent deuotion, yet there is much wanting: to wit, one thing which is moſt neceſſary for him. What is that? That leauing all, he forſake himſelfe, and go perfectly from himſelfe, and retaine nothing of ſelfe-loue. And when he hath done al that he knoweth to be done, let him thinke that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much which might be much eſteemed, but according to truth, let him affirme himſelfe to be an vnprofitable ſeruant, as our Sauiour hath ſayd: When you ſhall haue done al things that are commanded you, ſay: We are vnprofitable ſeruants. They may be be truly poore in ſpirit and naked, and ſay with the Prophet: I am alone and poore: yet no man richer, no man more powerfull, no man

man more free thē he that can leaue himſelfe and all things, and put himſelfe in the meaneſt and loweſt place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Croſſe.

VNTO many ſeemeth hard this ſpeach: Deny thy ſelfe, take vp thy Croſſe, and follow Ieſus. But it will be much harder to heare that laſt word: Get yee away from me, yee curſed into euerlaſting fire. For they that now willingly heare and follow the word of the Croſſe, ſhall not then feare to heare the ſentence of euerlaſting damnation. This ſigne of the Croſſe ſhall be in heauen, whē our Lord ſhall come to iudgment. Then all the ſeruants of the Croſſe, who in their life time conformed themſelues vnto Chriſt crucified, ſhall draw neer vnto our Lord with great confidence.

2. Why therefore feareſt thou to take vp the Croſſe, which leadeth thee to a kingdome. In the Croſſe is health, in the Croſſe is life, in the Croſſe is protection againſt our enemies, in the Croſſe is infuſion of heauenly ſweetnes, in the Croſſe is ſtrength of mind, in the Croſſe is ioy of ſpirit, in the Croſſe is the height of vertue, in the Croſſe is the perfection of ſanctity. There is nor health of the ſoule, nor hope of euerlaſting life but in the Croſſe. Take vp therfore thy Croſſe and follow Ieſus, & thou ſhalt go into life euerlaſting. He is gone before, bearing his Croſſe, and is dead for thee on the Croſſe; that thou maieſt alſo beare thy Croſſe, & deſire to dy on the Croſſe, with him. For if thou dyeſt with him, thou ſhalt alſo liue with him. And if thou be his companion in payne, thou ſhalt be partaker with him alſo in glory.

3. Behould in the Croſſe al doth conſiſt, and all lyeth in ending our life vpon it: for there is no other

way

way vnto life, and vnto true inward peace, but the way of the Holy Crosse, and of daily mortification. Go where thou wilt, seeke whatsoeuer thou wilt: thou shalt not find a higher way aboue, nor a safer way below, then the way of the holy Crosse. Dispose & order all thinges according to thy will, and iudgment: yet thou shall euer find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, so as thou shalt neuer fully auoide the Crosse. For either thou shalt feele payne in thy body, or in thy soule thou shalt suffer tribulation of spirit.

4. Somtimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, somtimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours; & which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irksome to thy selfe: neither canst thou be deliuered or eased by any remedy or comfort: but so long as pleaseth God, thou oughtest to beare it. For God will haue thee learne to suffer tribulation without

comfort; and that thou submit thy selfe wholy to him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath so liuely a feeling of the passion of Christ, as he who hath chaunced to suffer the like. The Crosse therfore is alwayes ready, & euery where attendeth thee. Thou canst not escape it, whither soeuer thou flyest for whersoeuer thou goest, thou carriest thy selfe with thee, and shalt euer finde thy selfe both aboue and below, without & within: which way soeuer thou doest turne thee, alwayes thou shalt find the Crosse: and euery where of necessity thou must haue patience, if thou wilt haue inward peace, and deserue an euerlasting Crowne.

5. Yf thou beare the Crosse willingly, it will beare thee, and lead thee to thy desired end: to wit, where there shalbe an end of suffering, though heere there shall not. Yf thou beare it vnwillingly, thou makest for thy selfe a new burthen, and increasest thy loade, and yet not

notwithstanding thou must beare it. Yf thou cast away one Crosse, without doubt thou shalt find another, & that perhaps a more heauy.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that which no man could euer auoyd? Which of the Saints in the world was without Crosses, and tribulations? Verily Iesus Christ our Lord was neuer one houre without paine of suffering, so long as he liued. Christ (saith he) ought to suffer, & rise againe from death, & so to enter into his glory: and how doest thou seek any other way, then this high way, which is the way of the holy Crosse?

7. The whole life of Christ was a Crosse and Martyrdome: and doest thou seeke rest and ioy? Thou art deceaued, thou art deceaued, if thou seekest any other thing, then to suffer tribulation: for this whole mortall life is full of miseries, and enuironed on euery side with Crosses. And how much the more one hath profited in spirit; so much the heauier

heauier Crosses he oftentymes findeth: for the loue he beareth to God increaseth the griefe which he endureth for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though so many wayes afflicted, is not without the remedy of spirituall consolation, for the great good which he perceaueth to grow vnto him by the bearing of his Crosse. For whilest he willingly putteth himselfe vnder it, all the burthen of tribulation is turned into the confidence of diuine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace. And sometymes he is so comforted with the desire of tribulation, and aduersity, for the loue of cōforming himselfe to the Crosse of Christ, that he would not with at any time to be without sorrow and tribulation: because he belieueth, that so much the more gratefull he shall be vnto God, how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a worke of humane

mane vertue; but it is the grace of Christ, that can, and doth so much in fraile flesh: that what naturally it alwayes abhorreth and flyeth, that, by fervour of spirit, it taketh hould on and loueth.

9. It is not according to mans inclination to beare the Crosse, to loue the Crosse, to chastice & subdue the body, to fly honors, to suffer cōtumelies with a ioyfull hart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to beare all aduersities, and domages, and to desire no prosperity in this world. Yf thou considerest thy selfe, thou shalt be able to performe no such matter of thy selfe. But if thou trustest in our Lord, strength shall be giuen thee from heauen, and the world & flesh shall be made subiect to thy commaund. Neither shalt thou feare thy enemy the Diuell, if thou bee armed with faith, & signed with the Crosse of Christ.

10. Resolue therefore with thy selfe, like a good and faithfull seruant of Christ, to beare mānfully the

Crosse

Crosse of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy loue. Prepare thy selfe to beare many aduersities and diuers kinds of troubles in this miserable life: for so it wilbe with thee, whersoeuer thou be: & so surely thou wilt finde it, whereſoeuer thou hide thy selfe. So it must be, and there is no remedy, or meanes to auoide tribulation and sorrow, but to beare them. Drinke of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt be his friend, and desirest to haue part with him. Leaue the desire of comfortes to God: let him do therein as shall best please him. Set thou thy hart vpon the suffering of tribulations, and account them the greatest comfortes: for that the passions of this life are not cõdigne to future glory, although thou alone couldest suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt come to this estate, that tribulation shall seeme sweet, and pleasant vnto thee for Christ: then thou maist thinke it is well with thee, for thou hast found

found a Paradiſe vpon earth. As long as it is grieuous vnto thee to ſuffer, and that thou deſireſt to fly it; ſo long ſhalt thou be ill at eaſe: and the tribulation thou flyeſt will follow thee euery where.

12. If thou ſetleſt thy ſelfe to that thou oughteſt, to wit, to ſuffer, and to dy to thy ſelfe, it will quickly be better with thee, and thou ſhalt finde peace. Although thou ſhouldeſt haue bene rapt euen vnto the third heauen with Paul, thou art not for this aſſured, that thou ſhalt ſuffer no contradiction. I (ſaith Ieſus) will ſhew him how great thinges he muſt ſuffer for my name. It reſteth therfore, that thou ſuffer, if thou wilt loue Ieſus, and perpetually ſerue him.

13. O, would to God, thou wert worthy to ſuffer ſomthing for Ieſus! how great glory would it be vnto thee, what ioy to all the Saints of God, how great edification alſo to thy neighbour! For all do commend patience, though few deſire

to

to ſuffer. With great reaſon thou oughteſt to be willing to ſuffer a little for Chriſt; ſince many ſuffer far greater thinges for the loue of the world.

14. Know for certaine that thou oughteſt to lead a dying life. And how much the more euery one dieth to himſelfe; ſo much the more doth he begin to liue to God. No man is fit to attaine vnto heauenly thinges, vnleſſe he ſubmit himſelfe to the bearing of aduerſities for Chriſt. Nothing is more gratefull vnto God, nothing more wholeſome to thee in this world, then to ſuffer willingly for Chriſt. And if it were in thy choyce, thou ſhouldeſt rather with to ſuffer aduerſities for Chriſt, then to enioy the delight of many comforts: becauſe by theſe meanes thou ſhouldeſt be more like vnto Chriſt, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our merit, and the perfection of our eſtate conſiſteth not in much ſweetnes & comfortes: but rather in ſuffering great afflı-

afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had been any better thing, and more profitable to the health of man then ſuffering, ſurely Chriſt would haue ſhewed it by word, and example. But he plainly exhorted all the diſciples that followed him, and all that deſire to follow him, to the bearing of the Croſſe, and ſaith: If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelfe and take vp his Croſſe, and follow me. So as when we haue read & ſearched all, let this be the laſt concluſion: That by many tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdome of God.

The end of the ſecond Booke.

OF

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE THIRD BOOKE.

CHAP. I.

Of the inward speach of Christ vnto a faithfull soule.

I Will heare what our Lord God will speak in me Blessed is the soule that heareth our Lord speaking in her: and receaueth from his mouth the word of comfort. Blessed

Blessed are those eares that receaue the sound of the voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world. Blessed indeed are those eares that harken not to the voice which soundeth outwardly, but vnto truth which teacheth inwardly. Blessed are the eies that being shut vp to outward thinges, are attentiue to those things that are internall. Blessed are they that enter into the inward thinges, and indeauor to prepare thêselues more and more by daily exercises to the attayning of heauenly secrets. Blessed be they that delight to attend to the seruice of God, & cast from them all impediméntes of this world.

2. Consider these thinges my soule, and shut vp the dore of thy sensuall desires: that thou maist heare what thy Lord God speakes in thee. Thus saith thy beloued: I am thy safety, thy peace, and thy life. Keep thy selfe with me, and thou shalt find peace. Forsake all transitory thinges

thinges and seeke those that be euerlasting. What are temporall things, but deceauing snares? and what do all creatures auaile thee, if thou bee forsaken by the Creatour? Forsake therefore all earthly thinges and labour to please thy Creatour, and be faithfull vnto him, that thou maist attaine vnto true happines.

CHAP. II.

That truth speaketh inwardely without noyse of VVordes.

SPEAKE Lord, for thy seruant heareth. I am thy seruant, graunt me vnderstanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Stir vp my hart to heare the wordes of thy mouth. Let thy speach descend as the dew into my soule. The children of Israel in times past said vnto Moyses: Speak thou vnto vs, and we shall heare thee: Let not our Lord speake vnto vs, least perhaps we dye. Not so

ſo Lord, not ſo, I beſeech thee. But rather with the Prophet Samuel, I humbly and earneſtly intreat: ſpeak Lord, for thy ſeruant heareth. Let not Moyſes ſpeake vnto me, nor any of the Prophets: but thou rather ſpeake, my Lord God, the inſpirer, and enlightener of all the Prophets: for thou alone without them canſt perfectly inſtruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce words, but they giue not ſpirit. They ſpeak maruelous well, but if thou hould thy peace, they inflame not the hart. They deliuer the letters, but thou openeſt the ſenſe. They bring forth myſteries, but thou diſcloſeſt the vnderſtanding of ſealed thinges. They declare thy cõmaundements, but thou helpeſt to fulfill them. They ſhew the way, but thou giueſt ſtrength to walke in it. They worke only exteriourly, but thou inſtructeſt & enlightneſt the hartes. They water outwardly, but thou giueſt fruitfulnes. They ſound forth wordes,

wordes, but thou giueſt vnderſtanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therfore Moyſes ſpeak vnto me, but thou my Lord God, the euerlaſting truth; leaſt perhaps I ſhould dye, and become without fruit, if I be warned outwardly only and not inflamed within: leaſt the word heard and not fulfilled, knowen and not loued, belieued & not obſerued, ſhould increaſe my iudgment. Speake therefore Lord for thy ſeruant heareth, for thou haſt the words of euerlaſting life. Speake vnto me to the comfort of my ſoule and to the amendment of my whole life: and to thy prayſe and glory and euerlaſting honor.

CHAP. III.

That the wordes of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

SONNE heare my words, words of great comfort, excelling al the knowledg of the Philoſophers and wiſe

wiſe men of this world. My words are ſpirit and life, not to be weighed by the vnderſtanding of man. They are not to be drawn to vaine liking, but to be heard with ſilence, and to be receaued with all humility and great affection. And I ſaid: Bleſſed is the man whom thou ſhall inſtruct, O Lord, and ſhalt teach thy law, that thou maiſt giue him quietnes from euill daies, and that he be not deſtroyed vpon earth.

2. I (ſaith our Lord) haue taught the Prophets from the beginning, and ceaſe not continually to ſpeake to euery one: but many are deafe, and giue no eare to my ſpeach. The greater number doe more willingly liſten to the world, then to God: & follow ſooner the deſires of their fleſh, then the will of God. The world promiſeth temporall & ſmall things, and is ſerued with great diligence: I promiſe moſt high and eternall thinges, and the hartes of men are nothing moued with it. Who is he that ſerueth and obeyeth

me with equall care to that with which the world, & the Lords therof are serued? Blush Sidon, saith the sea. And if thou aske the cause, heare wherefore. For a little prebend a long iorney is vndertaken: for euerlasting life many will scarce once lift a foote from the ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily: for a penny somtimes there is great contention: for a vaine thing and sleight promise, men cease not to toile day and night.

3. But alas for an vnchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loath to take the least paines. Blush therefore slouthfull & complayning seruant, that they are found more ready to distruction, then thou to life. They reioyce more at vanity, then thou at truth. And yet they are somtimes frustrated of their hope: but my promise deceaueth none, nor sendeth him away empty that trusteth in me, I will giue that which I haue pro-

promiſed. I will fulfill that which I haue ſaid, but to him that remaines faithfull in my loue to the end, I am the reward of all good, and do try my deuout ſeruants in forcible proofes.

4. Write my words in thy hart, and thinke diligently of them: for they will be neceſſary in time of tentation. What thou vnderſtandeſt not when thou readeſt, thou ſhalt know in the day of viſitation. I am wont to viſite my elect two ſeuerall waies, to wit, with temptation, and comfort. And I dayly read two leſſons vnto them, one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increaſe of vertues. He that hath my words & deſpiſeth them, hath within himſelfe that ſhall iudg him at the laſt day.

A Prayer to implore the grace of deuotion.

1. Lord my God, thou art all that I can deſire. Who am I, that

dare ſpeak vnto thee? I am thy pooreſt ſeruant, and a moſt vile worme: much more poore and contemptible then I can or dare expreſſe. Remember Lord, that I am nothing, haue nothing, and can do nothing. Thou alone art good, iuſt, and holy; thou canſt do all things, performeſt all things, leauing only a ſinner voide of all good. Call to mind thy mercies, and fill my hart with thy grace, who wilt not that thy workes be voyd.

6. How can I ſupport my ſelfe in this miſerable life: vnleſſe thy mercy & grace comfort me? Turne not thy face from me: delay not thy viſitation; draw not away thy comfort, leaſt my ſoule become as earth without water vnto thee. Lord teach me to fulfill thy will: teach me to liue worthily and humbly in thy ſight; for thou art my wiſdome, thou doſt perfectly know me, and dideſt know me before the world was made, and before I was borne in the world.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That we ought to liue in truth, and humility in the ſight of God.

SONNE, walke in my ſight in ſincerity and truth; and euer ſeeke me in playnes of hart. He that walketh in my ſight in truth, ſhall be defended from euill incurſions, and truth ſhall deliuer him from ſeducers, and from the detractions of the wicked. If truth ſhall haue deliuered thee, thou ſhalt be truly free, and ſhalt not care for vaine ſpeaches of men. Lord it is true. According as thou ſaiſt, ſo I beſeech thee let it be done with me, and keepe me, & bring me to a happy end. Let thy truth teach me, and let it deliuer me from all euill affection and inordinat loue: and I ſhall walke with thee in great freedome of hart.

2. I will teach thee (ſayth the Truth) thoſe things that are right & pleaſing in my ſight. Thinke of thy

sinnes with great sorrow, and grief, & neuer esteeme thy selfe any thing for thy good works. Thou art in very deed a sinner, and subiect to many passions. Of thy selfe thou alwaies tendest to nothing, and art quickly cast downe and ouercome: quickly troubled, quickly dissolued. Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many thinges for which thou oughtest to humble, and despise thy selfe: for thou art much weaker then thou art able to comprehend.

3. And therefore let nothing seeme much vnto thee whatsoeuer thou doest Let nothing seem great, nothing precious, and wonderfull, nothing worthy of estimation: nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and to be desired, but that which is euerlasting. Let the eternall Truth aboue all things please thee. Let thy own great vnworthines alwaies displease thee Feare nothing, blame, and fly nothing so much, as thy sinnes, and vices: which ought

to

to displeaſe more thē the loſſe of any thing whatſoeuer. Some walk not ſincerly in my ſight, but led by a certaine curioſity, and pride, will know my ſecrets, and vnderſtand the high myſteries of God, neglecting themſelues and their own ſaluation. Theſe oftentimes (for that I reſiſt them) do fall into great tentations & ſinnes, for their pride and curioſity.

4. Feare the iudgments of God, dread the wrath of the almighty. But diſcuſſe not the works of the Higheſt. Search thine owne iniquities, in how much thou haſt offended, and how much good thou haſt neglected. Some carry their deuotiō only in bookes, ſome in pictures, ſome in outward ſignes and figures, ſome haue me in their mouths, but little in their harts. There are others that being illuminated in their vnderſtanding, and purged in their affection, do alwaies aſpire with an earneſt mind to euerlaſting happines: and are vnwilling to heare of the

things of this world, and do ſerue the neceſſities of nature with griefe; and theſe perceaue what the ſpirit of truth ſpeaketh in them. Becauſe it teacheth them to deſpiſe earthly, and loue heauenly things: to neglect the world, and day and night to deſire heauen.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderfull effect of diuine grace.

I Praiſe thee, O heauenly Father, Father of my Lord Ieſus Chriſt, for that thou haſt vouchſafed to remember me a poore and wretched creature O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, thanks be vnto thee, who ſomtimes with thy comfort refreſheſt me vnworthy of all comfort. I euer bleſſe and glorify thee with thy only begotten Sonne, and the holy Ghoſt for all worlds. O God my Lord, the holy louer of my ſoule, when thou ſhalt come into my

my hart, all that is within me will reioyce. Thou art my glorie and the exultation of my hart. Thou art my hope, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But for that I am yet weake in loue, and imperfect in vertue. I haue need to be comforted by thee: visit me therfore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline. Deliuer me from euill passions, & heale my hart of all inordinate affections: that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to loue, strong to suffer, and constant to perseuere.

3. Loue is a great matter, in very truth a great good: which alone maketh euery thing that is heauy, light; and beareth equally vnequall burthens. For it carrieth a burthen without a burthen, and maketh euery thing that is bitter sweet, and delightsome. The noble loue of Iesus enforceth man to worke great things, and stirreth him vp to desire allwaies the most perfect. Loue

will be aloft, and not kept downe with any base thinges. Loue will be free from all worldly affection, to the end his inward sight be not obscured, that he be not intangled with the desire of any transitory gaine, or troubled with the want therof. Nothing is sweeter then loue, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heauen or in earth: for that loue hath his beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God aboue all creatures.

4. He that loueth, flyeth, runneth, and reioyceth; he is free and not held in. He giueth all for all, & hath all in all, for that he resteth in one Highest aboue all, from which all good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the guifts, but turneth himselfe aboue all goods vnto the giuer. Loue oftentimes knoweth no measure, but inflameth aboue all measure. Loue feeleth no burthē, waigheth no paines, desireth aboue it strength, cōplaineth not of impossi-

impossibility, or that it thinketh all things lawful, & possible. It is therefore able to vndertake all things, & performeth & bringeth many things to effect: wheras he that doth not loue, fainteth and can do nothing.

5. Loue alwaies watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not: being wearied is not tyred: straitned, is not pressed: frighted, is not troubled: but like a liuely flame, and burning torch, breaketh vpwards, and passeth through all with great security. If any one loueth, he knoweth what this voice crieth. A lowd cry in the eares of God, is the burning loue of the soule, which sayth: My God, my loue, thou art wholy mine, and I wholy thine.

6. Enlarge me in loue, that my hart may tast how sweet it is to loue, and to be dissolued, and swimme in thy loue. Let me be possessed by loue, mounting aboue my selfe, with excessiue feruour, and admiration. Let me sing the song of loue, let me follow thee on high my belo-

ued, let my ſoule faint in thy praiſes reioycing with loue. Let me loue thee more thē my ſelfe, and not my ſelfe but for thee, and all in thee, that truly loue thee, as the law of loue commandeth which ſhineth in thee.

7. Loue is ſwift, ſincere, pious, ſweet and delightfull: ſtrong, patient, faithfull, prudent, ſuffering, full of courage, and neuer ſeeking it ſelfe. For where one ſeeketh himſelfe, there he falleth from loue. Loue is circumſpect, humble, and vpright: not remiſſe, not mutable, nor attending vnto vaine things: ſober, chaſt, conſtant, quiet, and guarded in all the ſenſes. Loue is ſubiect, and obedient to Superiours, meane and abiect to it ſelfe, deuout and thankefull vnto God, truſting and hoping alwaies in him, euen then, when God imparteth no ſweetnes vnto it: for without ſorrow none liueth in loue.

8. He that is not ready to ſuffer all things, and ſtand to the will of his

his beloued, is not worthy to be called a louer. A louer ought to imbrace willingly all that is hard and distastfull for his beloued; and not to turne away from him, for any contrary accidents.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proofe of a true Louer.

SONNE, thou art not yet a strong & prudent louer. Wherefore Lord? Because thou giuest ouer for a small aduersity, and too earnestly seekest comfort. A constant louer standeth firmely in temptations, & giueth not credit to the crafty persuasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so I am not vnpleasant to him in aduersity.

2. A prudent louer considereth not so much the guift of his louer, as the loue of the giuer. He rather esteemeth the good will, then the value, and placeth all guifts vnder his beloued. A noble louer resteth not

in the gift, but in me aboue any gift. All therefore is not left if somtimes thou hast lesse taste of me and my Saints then thou wouldest. That good and sweet desire which thou somtimes feelest, is the effect of present grace, and a certaine taste of the heauenly Country: wheron thou must not rely too much, for it goeth and commeth. But to fight against euill motions of the mind which may happen vnto thee, and to despise the suggestion of the diuell, is a signe of vertue and great merit.

3. Let not therfore strange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatsoeuer, trouble thee. Retaine a firme purpose and an vpright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that somtimes thou art suddainly rapt on high, and presently returnest againe vnto the accustomed vanities of thy hart. For thou dost rather vnwillingly suffer them, then commit them: and as long as they displease thee, & thou striuest against them, it is a merit, and no losse.

4. Know

4. Know that thy ancient enemy doth euer ſtriue to hinder thy deſire to good; and to diuert thee from all deuout exerciſe: to wit, frō the worſhiping of Saints, from the deuout memory of my paſſion, frō the profitable remembrance of thy ſinnes, from the guard of thine own hart, and from the firme purpoſe of profiting in vertue. He thruſteth many euill thoughts into thy mind, that he may cauſe a weariſomnes, & horrour in thee, to draw thee from deuout prayer and reading. Humble confeſſiō is diſpleaſing vnto him, and if he could, he would cauſe thee to ceaſe from receauing the Sacrament of my Body. Truſt him not, nor care for him, although he ſhould often ſet ſnares of deceipt to intrap thee. Charge him with it, when he ſuggeſteth euill, and vncleane thoughts vnto thee. Say vnto him: Auant filthy ſpirit, bluſh miſerable wretch, thou art filthy that bringeſt ſuch things vnto myne eares. Away from me wicked deceauer, thou

ſhalt

ſhalt haue no part in me: but Ieſus ſhal be with me as a ſtrõg warriour, and thou ſhalt remayne confoũded. I had rather dye and vndergo any torment, then to conſent vnto thee. Hould thy peace and be ſilent. I will heare thee no more, though thou ſhouldeſt worke me many troubles. My Lord is my light and ſaluation, whom ſhall I feare? If whole armies ſhould ſtand togeather againſt me, my hart ſhall not feare. Our Lord is my helper, and my Redeemer.

5. Fight like a good ſouldiar: and if thou ſometimes fall through frailty, recouer grater forces then before, truſting in my more aboundant grace: and take great heed of vaine pleaſing of thy ſelfe, & pride. This brings many into erroor, and makes them ſometimes fall into almoſt incurable blindnes. Let the fall of the proud fooliſhly preſuming of themſelues, ſerue thee for a warning, and a perpetuall humiliation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

That Grace is to be hid vnder the veile of Humility.

SONNE, it is more profitable, & safe for thee to hide the grace of deuotion, not to extoll thy selfe, nor to speake much, nor to esteeme much thereof: but rather to despise thy selfe, and feare it, as giuen to one vnworthy thereof. This affection is not to be cleaued vnto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary. Thinke when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art wont to be without it? Neither doth therin only cõsist the profit of spirituall life, when thou hast the grace of comfort; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently sufferest the withdrawing therof: so that thou be not then lesse diligent in the exercise of prayer, nor suffer thy selfe to passe ouer the rest of thy accustomed good works: but that thou

thou willingly performe what lieth in thee, according as thou art able & vnderstandest to be fit: not neglecting thy self wholy for the drinesse, and trouble of mind, which thou feelest.

2. There are many that when it succedeth not well with them, presently they become impatient or slouthfull. The way of man is not alwaies in his power, but it belongeth to God, to giue, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, & whom he will, as it shall please him and no more. Some vnaduised persons haue ouerthrowne themselues for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of deuotion: attempting more then they were able to perforne, not waighing the measure of their weaknes, but following rather the desire of their hart, thē the iudgment of reason. And because they presumed on greaters matters then was pleasing to God, they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a dejected estate

that

that built themselues nests in heauen: to the end that being humbled, and impouerished, they may learne not to fly with their own wings, but to liue in hope vnder my fethers. They that are yet new, and vnacquainted in the way of our Lord, vnles they gouerne themselues by the counsaile of discreet persons, may easily be deceaued and ouerthrowne.

3. And if they will rather follow their owne iudgment, then giue credit to others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawne from their owne conceipt. Seldome those that are wise in their owne opinion, suffer themselues humbly to be gouerned by others. A little knowledg with humility, and a slender vnderstanding, is better then great treasures of learning with a vaine selfe-liking It is better for thee to haue lesse, then much of that wherof thou máist be proud. He doth not discreetly, that wholy giueth himself ouer to mirth, for-

forgetting his former prouerty, and the chaſt feare of God, which feareth to looſe the grace which he hath obteyned. Neither is he vertuouſly wiſe, that in time of aduerſity or any tribulation whatſoeuer, yeildeth to deſpairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me leſſe confidently then he ought.

4. He that will be ouer ſecure in time of peace, ſhall be often found in time of warre too deiected and fearfull. If thou couldeſt alwaies continue humble, and lowly within thy ſelfe, and temper, & gouerne thy ſoule well, thou ſhouldeſt not ſo ſoone fall into danger & offence. It is good counſell, that when thou conceaueſt feruour of ſpirit, thou ſhouldeſt thinke what will become of thee, when that light ſhall leaue thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may returne againe, which for thy inſtruction and my glory I haue withdrawne for a time.

5. Such proofe is often more pro-

profitable, then if thou shouldest alwaies enioy prosperity according to thy desire. For merits are not to be waighed in a man by the number of visions and comforts which he hath, or by his knowledg in Scriptures, or by his being placed in high degree: but in that he is grounded in true humility, and repleniſhed with diuine charity: if he alwaies purely & entirely seeke the honour of God, if he esteeme himselfe nothing, and with a sincere hart despise himselfe, and reioyce more to be despised and humbled by others, then to be honoured.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a meane conceipt of our selues in the sight of God.

SHALL I speake vnto my Lord, sith I am dust and ashes? If I esteeme better of my selfe, behould thou standest against me, & my iniquities beare true witnes; neither can

can I speake against it. But if I abase and esteeme nothing of my selfe, & cast of all selfe conceipt, and (as I am) accompt my selfe to be dust, thy grace will be fauourable vnto me, and thy light will be neere vnto my hart: and all estimation how litle soeuer shalbe swallowed vp in the depth of my nothing, and perish euerlastingly. There thou shewest my selfe vnto me, what I am, what I haue byn, and whither I am come: for alas I am nothing, and I knew it not. And if I be left to my selfe, behould I become nothing, & a masse of infirmity. But if thou suddainly looke vpon me, I am presently made strong, and filled with new ioy. And it is a great meruaile, that I am so suddainly lifted vp, and so graciously imbraced by thee, that of myn owne waight alwaies sinke downward.

2. Thy loue is cause heereof, freely preuenting me, and releeuing me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grieuous dāgers, and

and (as I may truely say) deliuering me from innumerable euills. For surely by euill louing my selfe, I lost my selfe: and by seeking thee alone, & sincerly louing thee, I haue found both my selfe and thee, and for thy loue haue more deeply brought my selfe to nothing. For that thou, O most sweet Iesu, dealest with me aboue all defert, and aboue all that I dare hope and request.

3. Blessed be thou my God: for although I be vnworthy of all good yet the noblenes of thy bounty and thy infinite goodnes, neuer ceaseth to do good euen to the vngratefull, and to them that be turned away far frō thee. Turne vs vnto thee O Lord that we may be gratefull, humble, & deuout: for thou art our safety, our power, and our strength.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

That all things are to be referred vnto God, as vnto the laſt end.

SONNE I ought to be thy chiefeſt and laſt end, if thou deſire to be truly bleſſed. With this intention thy affection ſhall be purified which is oftentimes inclined inordinatly to it ſelfe, and vnto creatures. For if in any thing thou ſeeke thy ſelfe, thou preſently fainteſt and drieſt vp within thy ſelf. Direct therfore all thinges chiefly vnto me, for I am he that haue giuen all. Conſider euery thing as flowing from the higheſt good: and therfore all things are to be reduced vnto me as vnto their firſt beginning.

2. Out of me, as out of liuing fountaines, the little & the great, the poore & the rich, do draw the water of life: and they that willingly, and freely ſerue me, ſhall receaue grace for grace. But he that will glory out of

of me, or be delighted in any particuler good, shall not be grounded in true ioy, nor enlarged in his hart, but shall be many waies hindred and straitned. Thou oughtest therfore to ascribe no good vnto thy selfe, nor attribute the praise of vertue vnto any man: but giue all vnto God, without whome man hath nothing. I haue bestowed all, and will that all be returned to me againe: & with great seuerity I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vaine-glory. And if heauenly grace, and true charity enter in, there shall be no enuy nor grudging of hart, neyther shall there be any place for selfe loue. For diuine charity ouercommeth all, and enlargeth all the forces of the soule. If thou vnderstand aright, in me alone thou wilt reioyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised aboue all things, and to blessed in all.

CHAP. X.

That despising the world, it is sweet to serue God.

NOVV I wil speake againe o Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the eares of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy sweetnes o Lord, which thou hast hidden for those that feare thee! But what art thou to them that loue thee? What to them that serue thee with their whole hart? Truely vnspeakable is the sweetnes of thy contemplation, which thou bestowest on them that loue thee. In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetnes of thy charity, for that when I was not, thou madest me: and when I went astray far off from thee, thou broughtest me backe againe, that I might serue thee: and hast commanded me to loue thee.

2. O fountaine of euerlasting loue,

loue, what shall I say of thee? How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, euen when I withered away and perished! Thou hast vsed mercy with thy seruant beyond all the expectation of my hart: and hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shall I returne vnto thee for this grace? For it is not graunted to euery one to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and to vndertake a life of religion and perfection. Is it much that I serue thee, whome all creatures are bound to serue? It ought not to seeme much vnto me to serue thee: but this rather seemeth much, and meruailous vnto me, that thou vouchsafest to receaue into thy seruice one so poore and vnworthy, and to ioyne him with thy beloued seruants.

3. Behould all is thine which I haue, and wherby I serue thee. And yet in very deed thou rather seruest me then I thee. Behould heauen and earth, which thou hast created for

the ſeruice of man are ready at hand, and do daily performe whatſoeuer thou doſt command; and this is little: yea thou haſt alſo appointed the Angels to the ſeruice of man. But that which exceedeth all, is that thou thy ſelfe haſt vouchſafed to ſerue mā, and promiſed to giue thy ſelfe vnto him.

4. What ſhall I giue thee for all theſe thouſands of benefits? I would I could ſerue thee all the dayes of my life! I would I were able at leaſt for one day, to do thee ſome worthy and acceptable ſeruice! Thou art truly worthy of all ſeruice, of all honour and euerlaſting praiſe. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poore ſeruant, that am bound to ſerue thee with all my forces, neither ought I euer to ceaſe to praiſe thee. And this I wiſh to do, this I deſire: and whatſoeuer is wanting vnto me, vouchſafe I beſeech thee to ſupply.

5. It is a great honour, a very great glory to ſerue thee, and to deſpiſe al things for thee. For great grace

ſhall

ſhall be giuen to them that ſhall willingly ſubiect themſelues vnto thy moſt holy ſeruice. They ſhall receaue moſt ſweet comfort of the holy Ghoſt, that for thy loue ſhall renounce all carnall delights. They ſhall attaine great freedome of mind, that for thy names ſake ſhal enter into the narrow way, and ſhall haue left of all care of this world.

6. O ſweet and delightfull ſeruitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy; O ſacred ſtate of religious bondage, which maketh man equall to Angels, pleaſing to God, terrible to diuels, & gratefull, & of great eſteeme to all the faithfull! O ſeruice to be imbraced, & alwaies wiſhed for, by which we obtaine the greateſt good, & attaine to that ioy which neuer ſhall haue end!

CHAP. XI.

That the desires of our hart are to be examined & moderated.

SONNE, thou oughtest to learne many things more, which thou hast not yet well learned. What are those Lord? That thou frame thy desire wholy according to my pleasure: and be not a louer of thy selfe, but a diligent follower of my will. Thy desires oftentimes do stir thee vp, & driue thee forwards with violence: but consider whether thou art moued rather for my honour, then for thine owne profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoeuer I shall ordaine: but if there lurke in thee any selfe inclination, behould this is it that hindreth thee, and waygheth thee downe.

2. Beware therfore thou incline not too much vpon any desire that commeth to thy mind, before thou aske

aske my counsaile: least perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou beginne now to deslike that which before did please thee, and which thou earnestly desiredst as the best. For euery affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed: nor euery contrary affection at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to vse a restraint euen in good desires and endeauours: least by importunity thou incur distraction of mind, & by euill example become a scandall vnto others: or being gainsaid by others, thou be suddainly troubled & fall.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to vse violence, and resist manfully thy sensual appetites, and respect not what thy body would, or would not: but rather to labour, that euen perforce it be subiect to the spirit. And it is to be chastised so long, and to be forced vnder seruitude, vntill it readily obey in all things, and learne to be content with a litle, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and

not to murmur againſt any inconue-nience.

CHAP. XII.

Of the effect of Patience, and of ſtrife againſt Concupiſcence.

LORD God, I perceaue patience is very neceſſary vnto me: for that many aduerſities do happen in this life. Howſoeuer I ſhall diſpoſe of my peace, my life cannot be with-out warre and affliction. So it is Sonne. And my will is not that thou ſeeke after that peace which is voyd of temptations, or that feeleth no contrarieties, but then thinke that thou haſt found peace, when thou art exerciſed with ſundry tribu-lations, and tried in many aduerſi-ties.

2. If thou ſay that thou art not able to ſuffer much, how then wilt thou endure the fire of Purgatory? Of two euils the leſſe is alwaies to be choſen. That thou maiſt therfore a-uoid euerlaſting puniſhments in the next

next world, endeauour to ſuffer patiently for God the preſent euils of this. Doeſt thou thinke that men of this world ſuffer little or nothing? Thou art deceaued. Looke into the life euen of them that liue in greateſt delicacies, & thou ſhalt find it otherwiſe. But thou wilt ſay, they haue many delights, and follow their own wills, and therfore they make ſmall accompt of their tribulations. Be it ſo, that they haue whatſoeuer they will; but how long doſt thou thinke it will laſt?

3. Behould the wealthy of this world vanith away like ſmoke, and there ſhall be no memory of their ioyes paſt. Yea euen while they liue alſo, they reſt not in them without griefe, irkſomneſſe, and feare. For the ſelfe ſame things in which they take their delight, is oftentimes the cauſe of ſorrow vnto them and much affliction. They haue their deſert, who for that they immoderately ſeeke, & follow delights, they do not obtaine them, but with ſhame and

ſorrow.

4. O how ſhort and deceiptful, how inordinate, and filthy are thoſe pleaſures! Yea ſo ſenſeles and blind are men that they vnderſtand it not: but like dumbe beaſts, for a little pleaſure of a corruptible life, they incur the eternall death of their ſoule. Do not thou therfore, my Sonne, follow the diſordinate inclinations of thy corrupt nature, but forſake thine owne will. Delight in our Lord, and he will giue thee the deſires of thy hart.

5. If thou deſire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by me: behould, in the contempt of all worldly things, and in the cutting off all baſe delights, ſhall be thy bleſſings, and aboundant comforts ſhall be giuen thee. And how much the more thou withdraweſt thy ſelfe from al comfor of creatures, ſo much the ſweeter and more forcible conſolations ſhalt thou find in me. But at firſt thou canſt not attaine vnto them without a certaine griefe, labour, &

ſtrife

ſtrife. The olde cuſtome will make reſiſtance, and thou muſt ouercome it with another cuſtome that is better. Thy fleſh will murmur: but thou muſt bridle it with feruour of ſpirit. The old ſerpent wil ſting and trouble thee: but by prayer he ſhall be put to flight: and with profitable labour thou ſhalt ſhut the dore againſt him.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a ſubiect, according to the example of Chriſt.

SONNE, he that endeauoureth to withdraw himſelfe from obedience, withdraweth him ſelfe from grace. And he that ſeeketh to haue things in priuate, ſhall looſe the common. He that doth not willingly & freely ſubmit himſelfe to his Superiour, it is a ſigne that his fleſh is not yet perfectly obedient vnto him, but oftentimes rebelleth, and murmureth

mureth againſt him. Learne therfore readily to ſubmit thy ſelfe to thy Superiour, if thou deſireſt to ſubdue thine owne paſſions. For the outward enemy is ſooner ouercome, if the inward man be in good eſtate. There is no worſe enemy, nor more troubleſome to the ſoule, then thou vnto thy ſelfe, not agreeing well with the ſpirit. Thou muſt of neceſſity haue a true contempt of thy ſelfe, if thou wilt preuaile againſt fleſh and bloud.

2. Becauſe thou loueſt thy ſelfe as yet too inordinatly, therfore thou art afraid to reſigne thy ſelfe wholy to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou that art duſt, and nothing, ſubmitteſt thy ſelfe to a man for God: when I the Almighty and higheſt Soueraigne, who created all things of nothing, humbly ſubmitted my ſelfe vnto man for thee? I became the moſt humble and abiect of all men, that thou mighteſt ouercome thy pride with my humility. Learne to obey thou that art duſt.

Learne

Learne to humble thy selfe thou earth and clay, and put thy selfe vnder the feet of all men. Learne to breake thine owne will, and to yeild thy selfe to all subiection.

3. Take courage against thy selfe, and suffer not pride to liue in thee: but humble and submit thy selfe to all, that euery one may go ouer thee, and tread thee as durt of the streets vnder their feete. Vaine man, what canst thou complaine of? what canst thou answere foule sinner to them that reprooue thee, who hast so often offended God, and so many times deserued hell? But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soule was pretious in my sight: that thou mightest know my loue, and alwaies remaine gratefull for my benefits: that thou mightest continually giue thy selfe to true subiection and humility, and mightest beare patiently the contempt of thy selfe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIIII.

Of the ſecret Iudgments of God to be conſidered, leaſt we be extolled in our good deeds.

THOV thundreſt thy iudgements ouer me, o Lord, and ſhakeſt all my bones with feare and trembling: my ſoule is ſore afraid. I ſtand aſtoniſhed, and conſider; for that the heauens are not pure in thy ſight. If thou haſt found wickednes in Angels, and haſt not pardoned them, what ſhall become of me? Stars fel from heauen, and what do I preſume that am duſt? They whoſe workes ſeemed laudable, fell into the loweſt: and I haue ſeene them, that did eate bread of Angels, to be delighted with the huskes of ſwyne.

2. There is no ſanctity, if thou o Lord, withdraweſt thy hand. No wiſdome auaileth, if thou ceaſeſt to gouerne. No ſtrengeth helpeth, if thou

thou leaueſt to defend. No chaſtity ſecure, if thou doeſt not protect it. No cuſtody of our owne profitable, if thy ſacred watchfulnes be not preſent. For if thou leaueſt vs, we ſinke, and periſh: but if thou vouchſafeſt to viſit vs, we are raiſed vp, and do enioy life. We are inconſtant, but by thee we are ſtrengthned: we waxe could, but by thee we receaue heate.

3. O how meanely and baſely ought I to thinke of my ſelfe! how little, yea nothing ought I to eſteeme it, if I ſeeme to haue any good! O Lord, how ought I to ſubmit my ſelfe vnder thy vnſearchable Iudgments: where I find my ſelfe to be nothing els, but nothing, and nothing! O vnmeaſurable waight! O ſea that can neuer be paſſed ouer, where I find my ſelfe only and wholy nothing! Where then is the lurking hole of glory? Where is the confidence conceaued of vertue? All vayne glory is ſwallowed vp in the depth of thy Iudgments, which

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hang ouer my head.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight? Shall clay glory against him that frameth it? How can he be lifted vp with vaine words, whose hart is truly subiect to God? All the world cannot mooue him to any elation of mind, whome truth hath subiected vnto it, neither shall he be mooued with the tongues of all his praisers, that hath setled his whole hope in God. For they also that speake, behould, are nothing: they shall passe away with the sound of the words: but the truth of our Lord remaineth for euer.

CHAP. XV.

VVhat we ought to do, and say in euery thing which we desire.

SONNE, say thus in euery thing: Lord if it be pleasing vnto thee, let this be donne in this sort. Lord if it be to thy honour, let this be don

in

in thy name. Lord if thou ſeeſt it expedient for me, and alloweſt it to be profitable, then graunt vnto me, that I may vſe this vnto thine honour. But if thou knoweſt it will be hurtful vnto me, and not profitable to the health of my ſoule, take from me all ſuch deſire. For euery deſire proceedeth not from the holy Ghoſt, though it ſeeme vnto man right and good. It is hard to iudge whether a good ſpirit, or the contrary drive thee to deſire this or that: or whether alſo by thyne owne ſpirit thou be moued therunto. Many are deceaued in the end, who at the firſt ſeemed to be lead by a good ſpirit.

2. Alwaies therefore, whatſoeuer occurreth vnto thy mind to be deſired, let it be deſired with the feare of God, and with humility of hart: and aboue all thou oughteſt to commit it vnto me with full reſignation of thy ſelfe: and thou oughteſt to ſay, Lord thou knoweſt what is beſt, do this, or that, as thou pleaſeſt. Giue what thou wilt, and how much

much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knoweſt, and as beſt pleaſeth thee, and is moſt for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deale with me in al things according to thy will. I am in thy hand, turne me, and turne me againe which way ſoeuer thou pleaſe: Behould I am thy ſeruant, ready to obey thee in all things: for I deſire not to liue vnto my ſelfe, but vnto thee: and would to God it might be in ſome worthy and perfect manner.

A prayer for the fulfilling of the will of God.

3. Graunt me thy grace ſweet Ieſus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and perſeuere with me vntill the end. Grant me alwaies to deſire and will that which is moſt acceptable vnto thee, and beſt pleaſeth thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my will euer follow thine, and agree perfectly with it. Let my will and nill be all one with thine: and

not to be able to will, or refuſe any thing els, but what thou wilt, or reiecteſt.

4. Graunt that I may dye to all things that are in the world, and to loue for thy ſake to be contemned, and not to be knowne in this world. Graunt that aboue all things that can be deſired, I may reſt in thee, & mak my hart to enioy peace in thee. Thou art the true peace of the hart, thou art the only reſt: out of thee al things are troubleſome and vnquiet. In peace in the ſelfe ſame: that is, in thee, one chiefeſt, eternall good I wil ſleep and reſt. Amen.

CHAP. XVI.

That true comfort is to be ſought in God alone.

WHATSOEVER I can deſire, or imagine for my comfort, I looke not for it in this life, but hereafter. For if I ſhould alone haue all the comforts of the world,

world, and might enioy all the delights therof, it is certaine that they could not long endure. Wherfore my ſoule, thou canſt not be fully comforted, nor haue perfect delight but in God, the comforter of the poore, and the receauer of the humble. Expect a while my ſoule, expect the diuine promiſe, and thou ſhalt haue aboundance of all good things in heauen. If thou deſire inordinatly the things that are preſent, thou ſhalt looſe the celeſtiall and eternall. Haue temporall things in vſe, and the eternall in deſire. Thou canſt not be filled with any temporall goods, becauſe thou art not created to enioy them.

2. Although thou enioyeſt all that is created, yet canſt thou not be happy therby nor bleſſed: but in God that hath created all things, thy whole beatitude and happines conſiſteth: not ſuch as is ſeene, and commended by the fooliſh louers of the world; but ſuch as the good faithfull ſeruants of Chriſt expect, and the ſpirituall,

ſpirituall, and cleane of hart, whoſe conuerſation is in heauen, ſomtimes take a taſt of. Vaine and ſhort is all human comfot. Bleſſed and true is the comfort which is receaued inwardly from truth. A deuout man euery where carrieth with him Ieſus his comforter, and ſayth vnto him: Be preſent with me Lord Ieſus in euery place, and time. Let this be my comfort to be alwaies willing to want all human comfort. And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will & iuſt proofe be vnto me, as the greateſt comfort: for thou wilt not be angry alwaies, neither wilt thou threaten for euer.

CHAP. XVII.

That all our care is to be placed in God.

SONNE, ſuffer me to do with thee what I pleaſe. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkeſt as man: thou iudgeſt in many things as humane affection perſwadeth

deth thee. Lord, what thou saiest is true. Thy solicitude for me is greater, then al the care that I can take for my selfe. For he standeth at too great a hazard, that casteth not his whole care vpon thee. Lord, so that my will may remaine right and firme in thee, do with me whatsoeuer it shall please thee. For it cannot be but good, whatsoeuer thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darknes, be thou blessed: and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou againe blessed. If thou vouchsafest to comfort me, be thou blessed: and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou also euer blessed. Sonne, so thou oughtest to be, as ready to suffer, as to receaue ioy. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poore and needy, as plentifull and rich.

3. Lord, I will willingly suffer for thee, whatsoeuer thy pleasure is shall befall me. I will receaue indifferently from thy hand, good and euill, sweet, and sower, delightfull and sorrowfull: and giue thee thanks for

for all that happeneth vnto me Keep me from all ſinne, and I will neither feare death, nor hell: ſo as thou deſt not for euer caſt me from thee, and blot me out of the booke of life, what tribulation ſoeuer befall me, ſhall not hurt me.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporall miſeries, by the example of Chriſt, are to be borne patiently.

SONNE, I deſcended from Heauen for thy health: I tooke vpon me thy miſeries, my charity & not any neceſſity drawing me therunto, that thou mighteſt learne patience, & not refuſe to beare temporal miſeries. For from the houre of my birth, vntill my death on the Croſſe, I was not without ſuffering of griefe. I ſuffered great want of temporall things: I often heard many complaints againſt me: I bare patiently ſhame & reproches; for benefits I receaued ingratitud; for miracles, blaſphemies; for heauenly doctrine, reprehenſions.

2. Lord,

2. Lord, for that thou wert patient in thy life time, chiefly in fulfilling the commandment of thy Father, it is reaſon that I miſerable ſinner ſhould haue patience in all things according to thy will, and for myne owne health beare the burthen of this corruptible life, as long al thou wilt. For although this preſent life be burdenſome, yet notwithſtanding it is now by thy grace made very meritorious: and by thy example and the footſteps of thy Saints, more plaine and tollerable to the weake. Yea, much more comfortable alſo, then it was in times paſt in the old law, when the gate of heauen remained ſhut: and the way alſo to heauen ſeemed darker, when ſo few tooke care to ſeeke after thy Kingdome. Neither they alſo that then were iuſt, and were ordained to be ſaued, could enter into the heauenly glory before thy paſſion, and the debt of thy ſacred death was diſcharged.

3. O how great thanks am I boũd

to

to giue thee, that thou haſt vouchſafed to ſhew vnto me, and to all faithfull ſoules a direct, & ſure way to thy euerlaſting Kingdome! For thy life is our way, and by holy patience we go vnto thee that art our Crowne. If thou hadſt not gone before vs and taught vs, who would haue taken care to follow? Alas how many would ſtay behind, and remaine far off, if they beheld not thy excellent examples! Behould we are yet could although we haue heard of ſo many of thy wonders, and thy heauenly documents! what would become of vs if we had not ſo great light to follow thee?

CHAP. XIX.

Of ſuffering of iniuries: and who is proued to be truly patient.

WHAT is it thou ſayſt, Sonne? Ceaſe to complaine, conſidering my paſſion, and that of my other Saints. Thou haſt not yet made

reſiſtance to the ſheeding of bloud. It is but little thou ſuffereſt, in compariſon of them that haue ſuffered ſo much, ſo ſtrongly tempted, ſo grieuouſly afflicted, ſo many waies tried & exerciſed. Thou oughteſt therfore to call to mind the heauy ſufferings of others, that thou maiſt the eaſier beare the little aduerſities which thou ſuffereſt. And if they ſeem not little, beware leaſt thy impatience becauſe therof. Yet whether they be little, endeauour to beare all patiently.

2. How much the better thou diſpoſeſt thy ſelfe to ſuffering, ſo much the more wiſely thou doeſt, & ſo much the more doeſt thou merit: thou ſhalt more eaſily alſo endure it, if thy mind be prepared, & thy ſelfe accuſtomed therunto. Do not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things of ſuch a one, at the hands of ſuch a perſon, nor ſuch things are not to be ſuffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong and vpbraided me with thoſe thinges which I neuer thought of: but

but of another I will willingly suffer, & as I shall see cause. Such a thought is foolish, it considereth not the vertue of patience, nor by whome it shal be crowned, but rather waigheth the persons, and the iniuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that wil not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whome he listeth. But he that is indeed patient, mindeth not by whome he is exercised, whether by his Superiour, or some of his equals, or by his inferiour: whether by a good and holy man, or by a peruerse and vnworthy person. But indifferently from all creatures, how much soeuer, or how often soeuer any aduersity happeneth vnto him, he taketh all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gaine: for that nothing before God, how little soeuer, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be thou therfore alwaies prepared for the fight, if thou wilt haue the victory. Without combat thou

conſt not attaine vnto the Crowne of patience. If thou wilt not ſuffer, thou refuſeſt to be crowned. But if thou deſireſt to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently: without labour there is no comming to reſt: nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord let that be made poſſible to me by thy grace, which ſeemeth impoſſible to me by nature. Thou knoweſt that I can ſuffer little, & that I am quickly diſmayed, when a ſmall aduerſity ariſeth. Let all exerciſe of tribulation be made pleaſing vnto me, and be wellcome for thy name: for to ſuffer & to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my ſoule.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our owne infirmity: and of the miſeries of this life.

I will confeſſe againſt me my iniuſtice: I will confeſſe vnto thee o Lord

Lord my infirmity. Oftentimes it is a ſmall matter that diſcomforteth, & grieueth me. I purpoſe to reſiſt with courage, but when a ſmall temptation commeth, it bringeth me into very narrow ſtraits. It is ſomtimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations do proceed. And whileſt I thinke my ſelfe ſomwhat ſafe, when I leaſt expect it, I find my ſelfe ſomtimes ouercome with a ſmall blaſt.

2. Behould therfore Lord, my humility, and my frailty euery way knowne vnto thee. Haue mercy on me and deliuer me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I ſtick not faſt therin: let me not for euer remaine deiected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back, and confoundeth me in thy ſight, for that I am ſo ſubiect to fall, & weake in reſiſting of my paſſions. And though I do not altogeather conſent, yet their continuall aſſaults are troubleſome and grieuous vnto me: and it is tedious, & a very irkſome thing to liue thus daily in ſtrife. Hereby my infirmity

is made knowne vnto me: for that wicked fancies do alwaies much more easily enter in vpon me, then they can be cast out againe.

3. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous louer of faithfull soules; let it please thee to consider the labour & sorrow of thy seruant, and assist him in all whatsoeuer he vndertaketh. Strengthen me with heauenly force, least my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subiect to the spirit, preuaile and get the vpper hand: against which I ought to fight, as long as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kinde of life is this, where tribulations & miseries are neuer wanting; where all is set with snares, and compassed with enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another commeth, yea & during the first conflict also, many others come vnlooked for one after another.

4. And how can a life be loued that hath so many afflictions, and is subiect to so many calamities & miseries?

ries? How is it called a life that begetteth so many deaths, and plagues? And yet it is loued, and many seeke to delight themselues therin. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceiptfull and vaine, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our fleth do too much ouer rule vs. Some things draw vs to loue it, others to contemne it. To the loue of the world do draw vs the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: but the paynes and miseries that do iustly follow them, causeth a hatred and loathsomnes therof.

5. But alas wicked pleasure ouercometh the mind which is giuen ouer to the world, & she esteemeth it a delight to be vnder thorns: because she hath neither seene nor tasted the sweetnes of God, and the inward delight of vertue. But they that perfectly contemne the world, and endeauour to liue to God vnder holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the diuine sweetnes, promised to the true

forſakers of the world, and do more cleerly ſee how grieuouſly the world erreth, and how it is many waies deceaued.

CHAP. XXI.

That we are to reſt in God aboue all his gifts.

ABOVE all things, and in al things, my ſoule, thou ſhalt euer reſt in God, for he is the euerlaſting reſt of the Saints. Grant me moſt ſweet and louing Ieſu, to reſt in thee aboue all creatures, aboue all health and beauty, aboue all glory and honour, aboue all power & dignity, aboue all knowledge and learning, aboue all riches and arts, aboue all ioy & gladnes, aboue all fame and praiſe, aboue all ſweetnes and comfort, aboue all hope and promiſe, aboue all merit & deſire, aboue all gifts and preſents that thou canſt giue and impart vnto vs, aboue all ioy and iubily that the mind

mind of man can receaue and feele: laſtly aboue Angels and Archangels, and aboue all the heauenly Hoſt, aboue all viſible and inuiſible things, and aboue all that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, ſurpaſſeſt all, thou alone moſt high, thou alone moſt powerfull, thou alone moſt full and ſufficient, thou alone moſt ſweet, and comfortable, thou alone moſt beautifull, and louing, thou alone moſt noble & glorious aboue all things: in whome all good things togeather both are perfectly, and euer haue been and ſhal be: and therfore it is too little and not ſufficient, whatſoeuer thou beſtoweſt on me beſides thy ſelfe, or reuealeſt vnto me of thy ſelfe, or promiſeſt whileſt thou art not ſeene, and not fully obtained: for ſurely my hart cannot reſt, nor be fully contented vnleſſe it reſt in thee, & ſurmount all gifts and creatures whatſoeuer.

3. O my moſt beloued ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus, the moſt chaſt louer, the

gouernour of all creatures: who will giue me winges of true liberty to fly, & rest in thee! o when shal it be fully granted me to consider in quietnes of mind, and see how sweet thou art my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my selfe in thee, that for thy loue I may not feele my selfe, but thee alone, aboue all sense, and feeling, in a manner not knowne vnto all. But now I oftentimes lament, & beare my infelicity with griefe. For that many euills occur in this vale of miseries, which do often trouble, grieue, and darken me, often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not haue free accesse vnto thee, and that I should not enioy those sweet and heauenly imbracings, which thou alwaies giuest to the blessed and celestial spirits. Let my sighes and manifold desolation on earth moone thee.

4. O Iesus, splendor of eternall glory, and comfort of the pilgrime soule: with thee is my tõgue without voyce, and my silence speaketh vnto thee.

thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come! Let him come vnto me his poore seruant, and make me glad. Let him put out his hand, and deliuer me miserable wretch, from all anguish. Come, come blessed Lord: for without thee I shall haue no ioyfull day, nor houre. Thou art my ioy, and without thee there is nothing but want. A wretched creature I am, & in a manner imprisoned, and loaden with irons: vntil thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence, and giuest me liberty, and shewest a fauourable countenance vnto me.

3. Let others seeke what they please insteed of thee: but for me, nothing els doth, nor shall delight me, but thou only my God, my hope, my euerlasting health. I will not hould my peace, nor cease to pray, vntill thy grace returne againe, and thou speake inwardly vnto me. Behould I am heere: behould I come vnto thee, because thou hast called vpon me. Thy teares, and the desire of thy soule, thy humility, & the contrition

of thy hart, haue inclined, and brought me vnto thee. And I said: Lord I haue called thee, & haue desired to enioy thee, being ready to forsake all things for thee. For thou first hast stirred me vp that I might seeke thee Blessed be thou therfore o Lord, that hast shewed this goodnes to thy seruant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy seruant more to say before thee, but that he do greatly humble himselfe in thy sight, alwaies mindfull of his owne iniquity, and basenes: For there is none like vnto thee in all whatsoeuer is wonderfull, in heauen and earth. Thy words are good, thy iudgments true, & by thy prouidence all things are gouerned. Praise therfore & glory be vnto thee, O wisdome of the eternall Father: let my tongue, my soule, & all creatures togeather praise and blesse thee.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifould benefits of God.

OPEN, O Lord, my hart in thy Law, and teach me to walke in thy Commandments. Graunt me to vnderſtand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in generall, as in particuler, with great reuerence & diligent conſideration: that hence forward I may be able worthily to giue thee thanks But I know, & confeſſe, that I am not able to giue thee due thanks, for the fauours which thou beſtoweſt vpon me, euen in the leaſt moment. I am leſſe then the leaſt of thy benefits: & when I conſider the excellency of thy Maieſty, the greatnes therof maketh my ſpirit to faint.

2. All that we haue in our ſoule & body, and whatſoeuer we poſſeſſe outwardly or inwardly, naturally or ſpiritually,

ſpiritually, are thy benefits, and do praiſe thee as bountifull, pious, and good, from whome we haue receaued all that is good. Although one haue receaued more, another leſſe, all notwithſtanding are thine, and without thee euen the leaſt cannot be had. He that hath receaued greater, cannot glory of his owne deſert, nor extoll himſelfe aboue others, nor inſult ouer the leſſer: for he is greater & better that aſcribeth leaſt vnto himſelfe, and is more humble & deuout in rendring thanks. And he that eſteemeth him ſelfe baſeſt of all men, and iudgeth himſelfe moſt vnworthy, is fitteſt to receaue greater bleſſings.

3. And he that hath receaued fewer, ought not to be ſory nor beare it impatiently, nor enuy them that are enriched with greater ſtore, but attend rather vnto thee, and chiefly praiſe thy goodnes, for that thou beſtoweſt thy gifts ſo bountifully, ſo freely, and ſo willingly without reſpect of perſons. All things proceed from

from thee, and therfore in all things thou art to be praiſed. Thou knoweſt what is fit to be giuen to euery one; and why this man hath leſſe, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine, who doſt waigh in iuſt meaſure the deſerts of euery one.

4. Wherfore my Lord God, I eſteeme it as a great benefit, not to haue much, wherby outwardly and before men I might ſeeme worthy of praiſe and glory: ſo that he, who conſidereth his owne pouerty, and baſenes, ought not therfore to conceaue griefe, or ſorrow, or to be therfore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, & to be glad: for that thou, O God, haſt choſen the poore and humble, & the deſpiſed of this world for thy ſelfe, and for thy familiar & domeſticall friends. Witneſſes are thy Apoſtles themſelues, whome thou haſt appointed princes ouer all the earth. And yet they liued without complaint in the world, ſo hũble & ſimple, meane to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceipt, that they

they reioyced to receaue contumelies for thy name, & what the world abhorreth, they imbraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therfore ought so to reioyce him that loueth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy will in himselfe, and the pleasure of thy eternall appointment wherwith he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: & as peaceable and content in the last as in the first place: and as willingly to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteeme or accompt, as to be preferred in honour before all others, and to be greater in the world. For thy will and the loue of thy glory, ought to be preferred before all things: and to comfort him more, & please him better, then all the benefits which he hath receaued or can desire.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of foure thinges that bring much peace.

SONNE, now I will teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty. Do Lord, I beseech thee, as thou saist, for I shall be very glad to heare it. Endeauour my Sonne to do rather the will of another, then thine owne. Euer choose rather to haue lesse then more. Alwaies seeke the lowest place, and to be inferior to euery one. Wish alwaies, and pray, that the will of God may be wholy fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man entreth into the limits of peace and most quiet rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speach containeth much perfection. It is little in words but full in sense, and aboundant in fruit. For if it could exactly be kept by me, then should I not so easily be troubled. For as often as

as I feele my selfe vnquiet, and afflicted, I find that I haue straied from this doctrine. But thou that canst all things, and euer loueſt the good and profit of my soule, increase in me thy grace, that I may fulfill thy words & perfect mine owne health.

A Prayer against euill thoughts.

3. My Lord God, be not far from me: my God haue regard to help me, for sundry thoughts haue risen vp against me, and great feares afflicting my soule. How shall I passe throught them without hurt? How shall I breake them? I, saith he, will go before thee, and will humble the glorious of the earth. I will open the dores of the prison, and reueale vnto thee hidden secrets. Do Lord as thou saiest, and let all euill thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my only comfort, to fly vnto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call vpon thee from my hart, & to expect patiently thy cõfort.

A Prayer for enlightening of the Mind.

4. Enlighten me O good Ieſu, with the clearnes of inward light, & expell all darknes of my hart. Repreſſe the many wauering thoughts, and beare downe the fury of the téptations which violently aſſault me; Fight ſtrongly for me, and vanquiſh the euill beaſts, that is, the alluring concupiſcences, that peace may be made in thy vertue, and abundance of thy praiſe ſound in thy holy Court, which is a pure conſcience. Command the winds and tempeſts: ſay vnto the ſea, Be ſtill: and to the north-wind, Blow not; and a great calme ſhall enſue.

5. Send forth thy light & thy truth, that they may ſhine vpon the earth, for I am empty and vnprofitable earth, vntill thou imparteſt thy light vnto me. Powre out thy grace from aboue, wath my hart with heauenly dew, giue waters of deuotion,

to

to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift vp my mind, ouercharged with the waight of sinne: draw vp my whole desire to heauenly treasures, that hauing tasted the sweetnes of celestiall happines, it may loath to thinke of earthly vanityes.

6. Take me violently to thee, and deliuer me from al vnstable comfort of creatures: for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desire. Ioyne me vnto thee with an vnspeakable band of loue: for thou only filleft the mind of him that loues thee, & without thee all things are distastfull.

CHAP. XXIIII.

Of flying curious inquiry of the life of others.

SONNE, be not curious: trouble not thy selfe with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? do thou follow me. For what is it to thee, whether that

that man be such or no, or whether this man do, or speake this or that? Thou shalt not need to answere for others, but shalt giue accompt of thy selfe. Why therfore doest thou trouble thy selfe? Behould I know euery one what he is, and do see all things that are vnder the sunne: & do vnderstand how it is with euery one, what he thinketh, what he would, & at what his intention aymeth. All things therfore are to be committed vnto me: but do thou keep thy selfe in good peace, & suffer the vnquiet to do as they will. Whatsoeuer they shall haue done, or sayd, shall fall vpon themselues, for they cannot deceaue me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be knowne to many, nor to haue the priuate loue of men: for these things breed distractions, & cause great darknes of hart I would willingly vtter my words, and reueale my secrets vnto thee, if thou didest diligently obserue my comming: & didest open the dore of thy hart

hart vnto me. Be carefull and watch in prayer, and humble thy selfe in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

VVherin doth the firme peace of the hart, and true profit consist.

SONNE, I haue sayd: Peace I leaue to you, my peace I giue to you: not as the world giueth, do I giue to you. All do desire peace, but all care not for those thinges that appertaine vnto true peace. My peace is with the humble, & meeke of hart. Thy peace shall be in much patience. If thou wilt heare me and follow my voyce thou maist enioy much peace. What then shall I do? In euery thing attend vnto thy selfe what thou doest, and what thou sayest: & direct thy whole intention vnto this, that thou maiest please me alone, and desire or seeke nothing out of me. Of the sayings & doings of others, iudg nothing rash-

ly

ly: neither do thou intangle thy selfe with things not cõmitted vnto thee: and doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldome troubled.

2. But neuer to feele any trouble at all, nor to suffer any griefe of hart or body, is not the state of this life, but of euerlasting rest. Thinke not therfore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou haue no aduersary: nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire. Neyther do thou then esteeme highly of thy selfe, or imagine thy selfe to be especially beloued, if thou be in great deuotion, and sweetnes: for in these things a true louer of vertue is not tried: neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in hauing them.

3. Wherin then Lord? In offering thy selfe from the very bottom of thy hart, vnto the diuine seruice, not seeking thine owne interest, or commodity, neither in great not little, neither in tyme nor eternity: so that

that with equall countenance, thou maiſt perſiſt in thankſgiuing, both in proſperity and in aduerſity, waighing all things with an equall ballance. If thou be of ſuch courage and ſo patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawne from thee, thou prepare thy hart to ſuffer greater matters, and not iuſtify thy ſelfe, as though thou oughteſt not to ſuffer theſe, and ſo great afflictions, but iuſtify me in whatſoeuer I appoint, and praiſe my holy name; then thou walkeſt in the true & right way of peace: & thou ſhalt haue vndoubted hope to ſee my face againe with great ioy. And if thou attaine to the full contempt of thy ſelfe; then ſhalt thou enioy as great aboundance of peace, as thy banilhment may permit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the excellency of a free mind, which humble prayer better deserueth, then reading.

LORD, it is the worke of a perfect man, neuer to slack his mind from the attentiue thought of heauenly things, and as it were to passe without care though many cares: not faintingly, but with a certaine priuiledg of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most merciful God, preserue me from the cares of this life: least I should be too much intangled therby: & from the many necessities of the body, least I should be enthralled by pleasure from all hindrances of the soule, least broken with troubles I should be deiected & dismayed. I meane not from those things that worldly vanity so greatly desireth: but from those miseries,

that as punishments, do weigh down and hinder the soule of thy seruant, with the generall curse of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of spirit, as often as it would.

3. O my God, the vnspeakable sweetnes, make bitter vnto me al carnall comfort, which may draw me away frō the loue of euerlasting happynes, & wickedly allure me to it selfe with the force of certaine present delight. Let not flesh and bloud ouercome me O Lord. Let not the world & the short glory thereof deceaue me. Let not the Diuell and his subtile fraud supplant me. Giue me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to perseuere. Giue me insteed of all conforts of the world the most sweet vnction of thy spirit & in lieu of carnall loue, powre into my soule the loue of thy name.

4. Behould, meate, drinke, cloathes, & other necessaries for the maintenance of the body, are burdensome vnto a feruent spirit. Graunt me to affect such nourishments in due measure,

measure, and not to be intangled with an ouer great desire of them. It is not lawfull to renounce them wholy, for that nature is to be maintayned: but to desire superfluityes, and those thinges that do rather delight, then sustayne, the law of God forbiddeth: for otherwise the flesh would rebell against the spirit. Herein I beseech thee, let thy hand gouerne me, and teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

That priuate loue most hindreth from the chiefest good.

SONNE, thou oughtest to giue all for all, and to retaine nothing of thy selfe. Know that the loue of thy selfe, doth hurt thee more, then any thing in the world. According to the loue, & affection thou beareſt them, so doth euery thing cleaue vnto thee more or lesse. If thy loue be pure, simple, and well ordered, thou shalt

be free from bondage. Couet not that which thou maiest not haue. Be not willing to haue that, which may hinder thee and depriue thee of inward liberty. It is a wonderfull thing that thou committest not thy selfe wholy vnto me, from the bottome of thy hart, with all things, that thou canst desire, or haue.

2. Why dost thou consume thy selfe with vayne griefe? Why tyrest thou thy mind with needlesse cares? Resigne thy selfe to me, & thou shalt feele no losse at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be heere or there, to enioy thine owne commodity and pleasure; thou shalt neuer be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind: for in euery thing, somwhat will be wanting, and in euery place there will be some that will crosse thee.

3. Not euery externall thing therfore attained, and heaped together, helpeth thee: but it rather auaileth, if thou despise it, and doest root it out from thy hart, which thou must not vnderstand

vnderſtand only of thy reuenewes & wealth, but of the deſire of honour alſo, and vaine praiſe: all which do paſſe away with this fading world. The place auayleth litle, if the ſpirit of feruour be wanting: neither ſhall that peace which is ſought abroad long continue, if the ſtate of thy hart be deſtitute of a true foundation: that is, vnleſſe thou perſiſt in me, thou maiſt change, but not better thy ſelfe. For when occaſion doth happen, thou ſhalt find that which thou ſoughteſt to fly, & perhaps more.

A Prayer for cleanſing the hart, & obtayning of heauenly wiſdome.

4. Confirme me O Lord with the grace of the holy ſpirit. Giue me force to ſtrengthen my inward man, and to purge my hart from al vnprofitable care, & grief; not to be drawne away with ſundry deſires of any thing eyther little or great: but to conſider all things, how they are trāſitory, and do quickly fade, and that

my ſelfe do alſo paſſe away togeather with them: for nothing is permanent vnder the ſunne, where al things are vanity, and affliction of mind. O how wiſe is he that ſo conſidereth them!

5. Graunt me O Lord heauenly wiſdome, that I may learne aboue all things to ſeeke and find thee, aboue all things to delight in thee, and to loue thee, and to thinke of all created things as they are, according to the diſpoſition of thy wiſdome. Graunt me prudently to auoyd him that flatters me, and to ſuffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wiſdome not to be moued with euery blaſt of wordes: not to giue eare to dangerous flattery: for ſo we ſhall go on ſecurely in the way which we haue begun.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Againſt the tongue of Slanderers.

SONNE, be not grieued if ſome thinke euill of thee, and ſpeake that which thou doſt not willingly heare. Thou oughteſt to iudge the worſt of thy ſelfe, and to thinke no man weaker then thy ſelfe. If thou walke according to ſpirit, thou wilt not much eſteeme of flying wordes. It is not ſmall wiſdome, to be ſilent in time of euill, & inwardly to turne to me, & not to be troubled with the iudgment of men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the tongues of men. For whether they iudge well or euill, thou art neuertheleſſe alwayes the ſame. Where is true peace, and true glory? Is it not in me? And he that coueteth not to pleaſe men, nor feareth to diſpleaſe them, ſhall enioy much peace. From inordinate loue and vayne feare ari-

seth all disquiet of hart, and distraction of the senses.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ought to call vpon God, and blesse him when tribulation draweth neere.

BLESSED (O Lord) be thy name for euer: since it pleaseth thee that this temptation and tribulation should fall vpon me. I cannot fly it: but haue need to fly to thee, that thou maist helpe me, and turne it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present griefe. And now, beloued Father, what shall I say? I am taken in narrow straits, saue me in this houre. Yea therfore I am fallen in this houre, that thou maist be glorified, when I shall be greatly humbled, and by thee deliuered. Let it please thee Lord to deliuer me: for poor wretch that I am, what

what can I do, and whither ſhall I go without thee? Graunt patience Lord, euen this tyme alſo. Helpe me my God, and then I will not feare how much ſoeuer I be oppeſſed.

2. And now in this, what ſhall I ſay? Lord, thy will be done. I haue well deſerued to be afflicted and grieued. Surely I ought to beare it: and I would to God I might beare it with patience, vntill the tempeſt be paſſed ouer, and it become calme. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to aſſwage the violence therof, that I vtterly ſinke not vnder it, as oftentimes heretofore thou haſt done vnto me, my Mercy. And how much the more hard it is to me, ſo much the more eaſy is this change of thy mighty hand to thee.

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the diuine aide, and confidence of recouering grace.

SONNE, I am thy Lord, who do vse to giue comfort in the day of tribulation. Come vnto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth heauenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy selfe vnto praier. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy selfe to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy selfe in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that all doth little profit thee, vntill thou consider that I am he, that deliuer those that trust in me: & that out of me there is neither powerfull help, nor profitable counsell, nor remedy that can continue. But now thou hauing recouered breath after the tempest, gather strength againe in the light of my mercies: for I am at hand

hand saith our Lord, to repaire al, not only entirely, but also aboundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like vnto him that promiseth and performeth not? Where is thy faith? Be firme and constant. Take courage and be patient, comfort will be giuen thee in due time. Attend me, expect, I will come and cure thee. It is a temptation that vexeth thee: and a vaine feare that affrighteth thee. What els doth the care for future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow vpon sorrow? Sufficient for the day is the euill therof. It is a vaine & vnprofitable thinge to be grieued, or to reioice for future things, that perhaps will neuer happen.

3. But it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations: and a signe of little courage to be so easily drawne away by the suggestion of the enemy. For he careth not so he delude and deceaue thee, whether it be true or false which he proposeth: whether he ouerthrow thee

with the loue of preſent, or the feare of future things. Let not therfore thy hart be troubled, neither do thou feare. Belieue in me and put thy truſt in my mercy. When thou thinkeſt thy ſelfe furdeſt off from me, oftentimes I am neereſt vnto thee. When thou iudgeſt that almoſt all is loſt then oftentimes greateſt gaine of merit is at hand. All is not loſt when any thing falleth out contrary vnto thee. Thou muſt not iudg according to that which thou feeleſt for the preſent: nor giue thy ſelfe ouer to any griefe from whence ſoeuer it cōmeth, as though all hope of deliuery were quite gone.

4. Thinke not thy ſelfe wholy left although for a time I haue ſent thee ſome tribulation, or withdrawn thy deſired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdome of heauen. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the reſt of my ſeruants, that ye be exerciſed with many aduerſities, then that ye ſhould haue all things according to your deſires.

sires. I know the secret thoughts of thy hart, and that it is very expedient for thy soules health, that thou be left somtimes without tast and feeling of spirituall sweetnes, least perhaps thou shouldest be puffed vp with good successe, and shouldest please thy selfe in that which thou art not. That which I haue giuen, I can take away, and restore it againe when I please.

5. When I giue it, it is mine: when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: for mine is euery good, and euery perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or any crosse whatsoeuer, repine not, nor be not dismayed: I can quickly lift thee vp againe, and turne all thy sorrow into ioy. Neuertheless I am iust, and greatly to be praised, when I do all this vnto thee.

6. If thou be wise, and consider well thy case, thou wilt neuer yield so cowardly to griefe, for any aduersity that befalles thee, but rather reioyce and giue thanks: yea to accompt this thy only ioy, that afflicting thee with sorrowes, I do not

spare

ſpare thee. As my Father hath loued me, I alſo loue you, ſaid I vnto my beloued Diſciples, whom certainly I ſent not to temporall ioyes, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts: not to idlenes, but to labours: not to reſt, but to bring much fruit in patience. My Sonne remember theſe words.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures, to find our Creatour.

LORD, I ſtand yet in need of great grace, if I muſt go ſo far as that no man or creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing houldeth me, I cannot fly freely vnto thee. He deſired to fly with great liberty that ſaid, Who will giue me winges like a doue, and I will fly and reſt? What thing more quiet then a ſimple eye? And what more free, then he that deſireth nothing vpon earth? Man ought

ought therfore to aſcend aboue all creatures, and perfectly to forſake himſelfe, and to remaine in exceſſe of mind: and conſider that thou, who art the maker of all things, haſt nothing amongſt creatures like vnto thee. And vnleſſe a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedome of mind attend vnto diuine thinges. And for this cauſe there are ſo few contemplatiue men to be found, for that few can wholy ſequeſter themſelues from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is neceſſary to lift vp a ſoule, and to carry it aboue it ſelfe. And vnleſſe a man be lifted vp in ſpirit, and deliuered from all creatures, and wholy vnited vnto God: whatſoeuer he knoweth, and whatſoeuer he hath, is of little accompt. Long ſhall he be litte, and lye in earthly baſenes, that eſteemeth any thing great, but the one only vnmeaſurable and eternall good. For whatſoeuer is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing.

There

There is great difference betweene the wisdome of a spirituall and deuout person, and the knowledge of a learned and studious Clerke. Far more noble is that learning which floweth from aboue, from the diuine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

5. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeauour not to exercise those thinges that are required therunto. It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes & sensible things, and haue little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are lead, nor what we pretend, we that seeme to be called spirituall, that we take so much paynes, and so great care for transitory and base thinge, and scarce or seldome thinke of our owne inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4. Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we breake forth: and weight not our wordes with diligent examination. We mind not where

our

our affections lye: nor bewaile the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. For all flesh had corrupted her way, and therfore did that generall floud ensue. Sith our inward affection then is much corrupted, it must needs be that our action proceeding therof, be corrupted as a signe of the want of inward vigour. From a pure hart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We aske how much one hath done: but how vertuous his actions are; is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautifull, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: but how poore he is in spirit, how patient, and meeke, how deuout & spirituall, is seldome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth herselfe to the inward vertues. That is often deceaued: this hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceaued.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of deniall of our ſelues, and forſaking all our affections.

SONNE, thou canſt not poſſeſſe perfect liberty, vnleſſe thou wholy deny thy ſelfe. All ſuch as be louers of themſelues are bound in fetters, they are couetous, curious, wanderers, ſeekers of eaſe, and not of thoſe thinges that appertaine to Ieſus Chriſt; but oftentimes deuiſing, and framing that which wil not continue. For all ſhall periſh that proceedeth not from God. Keep this ſhort and complete word, Forſake all, & thou ſhalt find all. Leaue thy inordinate deſires, and thou ſhalt find reſt Conſider this well: and when thou haſt fulfilled it, thou ſhalt vnderſtand all.

2. Lord, this is not one dayes worke, nor childrens ſport: yea in this ſhort ſentence all the perfection of

of Religious persons is included. Sonne, thou must not go back, nor straight waies be deiected, when thou heareſt the way of the perfect: but rather be ſtirred vp to more worthy & noble attempts, or at leaſt to cõceaue an earneſt deſire therof. I would it were ſo well with thee, and thou wert come ſo far, that thou wert no longer a louer of thy ſelfe, but didſt ſtand meerly at my beck, and at his whom I haue appointed a Father ouer thee: then thou ſhouldeſt exceedingly pleaſe me, & all thy life would paſſe away in ioy and peace. Thou haſt yet many thinges to forſake which vnleſſe thou wholy reſigne ouer vnto me, thou ſhalt not attaine to that which thou deſireſt I counſell thee to buy of me purified gould, that thou mayſt become rich, that is, heauenly wiſdome, which treadeth vnderfoot all baſe and earthly things. Set little by the wiſdome of this world, and eſteeme not of the contentment of men, nor thine own fancyes.

3. I ſaid, that thou ſhouldeſt buy

buy the meane and baſe things, with the precions, & thoſe that were with men of great eſteeme. For true heauenly wiſdome ſeemeth very baſe, & of ſmall accompt, & is ſcarce thought of by men: for that eſteemeth not highly of it ſelfe, nor ſeeketh to be magnified vpon earth, which many praiſe from the teeth outward, but in their life they are far from it: yet is it the precious pearle which is hidden from many.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of Inconſtancy of hart, and of directing our finall intentions vnto God.

SONNE, truſt not to thy affection: that which now is, will quickly change into another. As long as thou liueſt thou art ſubiect to mutability, euen againſt thy will: ſo that now thou art merry, now ſadd, now quiet, now troubled, now deuout, now diſtracted,

distracted, now diligent, now idle, now heauy, now light. But he that is wise, and well instructed in spirit, remaineth alwaies one in the middest of these changes, not heeding what he seeketh in himselfe, or which way the wind of mutability bloweth: but that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought, to the most perfect and best end. For so he may continue one, and the selfe same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chaunces, directing alwayes the sincere eye of his intention vnto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly doth he passe through the variety of many contrary waues. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blind, for it quickly looketh vpon some delight, some obiect that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholy free from all blemish of seeking himselfe. So the Iewes in times past came into Bethania to Martha & Mary, not for Iesus alone,

alone, but to see Lazarus also. The eye of our intention therfore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed vnto me, neglecting the multitude and variety of earthly obiects.

CHAP. XXXIIII.

That God is sweet aboue all things, and in all thinges to him that loueth.

BEHOVLD my God, & all things! What would I haue more, and what can I desire more happy? O sweet and comfortable word! but to him that loueth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things! Inough is said to him that vnderstandeth: and it is pleasant to him that loueth to repeat it often. For when thou art present, all things do yield delight, but when thou art absent, all becomes irksome. Thou giuest quiet of

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of hart and much peace, and pleasant ioy. Thou makest men think well of all, and praise thee in all things: neither cā any thing please vs long without thee: but if it be pleasant and delightsome, thy grace must be present, & it must be seasoned with the sweetnes of thy wisdome.

2. What can be distastfull vnto him, to whome thou art pleasing: And whom thou delightest not, what can can be pleasant? But the wise of this world, and that haue their contentment in sensuall things, cannot attaine to thy wisdome, for in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. But they that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proued to be truly wise: for they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, & what good soeuer is found in creatures, they wholy referre vntò the praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great is the difference betweene the sweetnes of the Creatour, and

and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of vncreated and created light.

3. O euerlasting light, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightnesse from aboue, and pierce the most inward corners of my hart: purify, reioyce, clarify & quicken my spirit with all the powers therof, that I may cleaue vnto thee with excesse of vnspeakable ioy. O when will that blessed and desired houre come, that I may be filled with thy presence, and thou maist be vnto me all, in all things; as long as this is not graunted me, I shall not haue full nor perfect ioy. Alas! my old man yet liueth in me, he is not wholy crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He doth yet couet strongly against the spirit, and moueth euill warres, and suffereth not the Kingdome of my soule to be in peace.

4. But thou that rulest the powers of the sea, and assuagest the motion of the waues, rise and help me: dissipate the people that desire war, and destroy them in thy might, and let

let thy hand be glorified: for there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

CHAP. XXXV.

That there is no ſecurity from temptation in this life.

SONNE, there is no ſecurity in this life: as long as thou liueſt thou ſhalt alwayes haue need of ſpirituall armour. Thou liueſt among enemies, and art aſſaulted on all ſides: if therfore thou defendeſt not thy ſelfe on euery ſide with the ſhield of patience, thou canſt not be long vnwounded. Moreouer if thou fixe not thy hart on me with a ſincere will to ſuffer all things for me, thou canſt not ſuſtaine the heate of this battaile, nor get that victorious crowne which they haue that are in glory. Thou oughteſt therefore manfully to go through all, & to vſe a ſtrong hand againſt whatſoeuer withſtandeth thee. For to him

that ouercommeth is giuen Manna; and to the negligent is left much woe.

2. If thou seekest rest in this world, how wilt thou then attaine to euerlasting rest? Giue not thy selfe to much ease, but to much patience. Seeke true peace, not in earth, but in heauen; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the loue of God willingly to vndergoe whatsoeuer labours, to endure whatsoeuer griefes, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, iniuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these help to the attaining of vertue: these try a Nouice of Christ, these make a heauenly crown. I will giue an euerlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3. Thinkest thou, that thou shalt alwaies haue spirituall consolations at will? My Saints had not so, but many afflictions, & sundry temp-

tations,

tations, and many discomforts: all which they endured patiently, & trusted rather in God, then in themselues: knowing that the sufferings of this time are not condigne to the deseruing of future glory. Wilt thou haue that straight waies, which many after teares, & great labours haue hardly obteined? Expect the comming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage: feare not, do not flye, but offer both body and soule for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentifull manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Against the vaine Iudgments of men.

SONNE, fixe thy hart stedfastly on God, and feare not the iudgments of men, when thy conscience giueth testimony of thy iustice and innocency. It is a good and a happy

thing to suffer in that sort: neither will it be burdensome to an humble mind, nor to him that trusteth rather in God, then in himselfe. The most part of men are giuen to talke much, and therfore little care is to be had of their words: neyther is it possible to satisfy all. Though the Apostle endeauoured to please all in our Lord, & made himselfe all vnto al, yet he little regarded that he was iudged by humane day.

2. He did for the edification and health of others as much as he could, and lay in him: yet could he not hinder, but that he was somtimes iudged, & despised by others. Therfore he committed all to God, who knew all, & defended himselfe with patience, & humility against euill tōgues, & such as thought vanities & lyes, & spake what they listed: Yet somtimes notwithstanding he answered, least the weake might haue receaued scandall by his silence.

3. Who art thou, that feareſt a mortall man? to day he is, and to morrow

monrrow he is not seene. Feare God & the terror of men shall not trouble thee. What harme can the wordes or iniuries of any do thee? he rather hurteth himselfe then thee: neyther can he auoyd the iudgments of God, be he what he will. Haue thou God before thine eyes, and contend not with complayning wordes. And if for the present thou seemest to be troaden down, & to suffer shame and confusion, without desert, do not repine, neyther doe thou lessen thy crowne by thy impatience; but rather lift vp thine eyes to me in heauen. I am able to deliuer thee from shame and wrong, and to repay euery one according to their works.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of a full and pure resignation of our selues for the obtayning freedome of hart.

SONNE, leaue thy selfe, and thou shalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy selfe, and thou shalt euer gaine. For greater grace shall alwaies be giuen thee, when thou dost perfectly resigne thy selfe, and not turne back to take thy selfe againe. Lord, how often shall I resigne my selfe? & wherin shall I forsake my selfe? All waies, and in euery thing, as well in little as in great. I do except nothing, but do require that thou be as it were naked and void of all things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, & I thine. vnlesse both within & without thou be free from al self wil? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better shalt thou find thy selfe,

selfe: and how much the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gaine.

2. Some there are that resigne themselues, but with some exception For they put not their whole trust in God, & therfore do labour to prouide for themselues. Some also at the first do offer all, but afterwards being assailed with temptations, do returne againe to that which they had left, & therefore they go not forwards in the way of vertue. These shall not attaine to the true liberty of a pure hart, nor to the grace of my diuine familiarity, vnlesse they first make an entiere resignation, and offer themselues a daily sacrifice vnto me. For without this can neuer be obtained the vnion with me, wherewith my Saints enioy me.

3. I haue often said vnto thee, and now againe I say the same: Forsake thy selfe, resigne thy selfe, and thou shalt enioy internall peace. Giue all for all, seeke nothing, require no-

thing, repose thy selfe purely & with a full confidence in me, & I will giue my selfe vnto thee, and darknes shall not couer thee. Let this be thy whole endeauour, let this be thy praier, let this be thy desire, that casting off all propriety, thou maist all naked follow thy naked Sauiour Iesus: & dying to thy selfe, maist liue eternally to me. Then shall vaine fantasies, euill perturbations, & all superfluous cares fly away: then shall immoderate feare leaue thee, and inordinate loue shall dye.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of good gouernment in outward things: and of recourse to God in dangers.

SONNE, thou oughtest with al diligence to procure, that in euery place and action, or externall businesse, thou be inwardly free, & maister of thy selfe, and that all things be vnder

vnder thy disposition, and thou not subiect to them: that thou maist be Lord & Maister of thy actions, not a seruant or a hireling, but rather a freeman, & a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot and freedome of the sonnes of God, who put the things that are present vnder their feet, & place their thoughts on that which is eternall: who looke on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right do behould the things of heauen: who suffer not themselues to be drawne to cleaue vnto them, but rather dispose and vse them, as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the Creatour of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remayne firme and stedfast in all euents, and doest not weigh by the outward apparence, nor with a carnall eye, the thinges which thou seest and hearest: but presently in euery occasion doest enter with Moyses into the Tabernacle to aske counsell of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes heare the diuine and celestiall

oracle, and shalt returne instructed of many thinges both present and to come. Moyses had alwaies recourse to the Tabernacle for the diciding of all doubts & obscure questions, and fled to the help of prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity and dangers of men. So oughtest thou in like manner to fly to the closet of thy hart, earnestly craving the diuine fauour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therfore was Iosue & the children of Israel deceaued by the Gabaonites, because they consulted not first with God, but giuing too lightly credit to fayre wordes were deluded with counterfaite piety.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a man be not ouer earneſt in his affaires.

SONNE, alwaies commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time: expect my ordination, and thou

thou ſhalt find it, wil be for thy good. Lord, I do moſt willingly commit all vnto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I cleaued not too much to future euents, but offered my ſelfe with all readineſſe of mind to thy diuine pleaſure!

2. Sonne, oftentimes a man doth earneſtly labour for that which he deſireth: and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind, & not to eſteeme ſo much of it, as before he did: for mans affections do not long continue fixed on one thing, but do paſſe from one to another. It is therfore a matter, not of leaſt moment, to forſake our ſelues euen in the leaſt things.

3. The true ſpirituall profit of man, conſiſteth in denying & forſaking of himſelfe: and he that is reſigned, liueth in great freedome & ſecurity. But the ancient enemy, who alwaies laboureth to withſtand the ſeruants of God, omitteth at no time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth ſtill in waite, to caſt the

vnwary, if he can, into the snare of deceipt. Watch therfore & pray, saith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XL.

That man hath no good of himselfe, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

LORD, what is man, that thou art mindfull of him, or the sonne of man, that thou vouchsafest to visit him? What hath man deserued that thou shouldest giue him thy grace? Lord, what cause haue I to cõplaine, if thou forsake me? Or if thou doest not that which I desire, what can I iustly say against it? Surely, this I may truely thinke and say: Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I haue nothing that is good of my selfe: but in all thinges I do fayle, and am defective, and doe euer tend to nothing: and vnlesse thou help me, and doest interiourly instruct me, I become cold,

cold, and am dissolued.

2. But thou, O Lord, art alwaies the same, & endurest for euer, alwaies good, iust, and holy, doing all things well, iustly, and holily, and disposing all thinges with wisdome. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to goe forwardes, doe neuer continue in one estate: for seauen different tymes are changed ouer me, yet doth it soone turne to the better, when it so pleaseth thee, & when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canst help me without the fauour of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my hart shalbe conuerted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherfore if I could once perfectly forsake all humane comfort, eyther for the loue of deuotion, or for mine owne necessity, which inforceth me to seek after thee (for none els can comfort me) then might I wel hope in thy grace, and reioyce in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thankes

4. Thankes be vnto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me: but I am meere vanity, and nothing before thee, an vnconstant and weake man. Wherof then can I glory? Or why do I desire to be esteemed of? Is it not of nothing? And this is most vayne. Truly vaine glory is an euill plague & very great vanity: becausе it draweth from true glory, and robbeth the soule of heauenly grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himselfe, he displeaseth thee: whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is depriued of true vertue.

5. But true glory, and holy exultation, and ioy, is for a man to glory in thee, & not in himselfe; to reioyce in thy name, and not in his owne vertue, nor to delight in any creature, but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy worke, not mine: let thy holy name be for euer blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be giuen. Thou art my glory, thou art the ioy of my hart. In thee

will

will I glory and reioyce all the day; but for my selfe I will not ioy, but in my infirmityes.

6. Let the Iewes seeke the glory, which one man giueth to another: I will desire this, which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporall honour, all worldly highnesse, compared to thy eternall glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be all praise, honour, vertue, and glory for all eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporall Honours.

SONNE, trouble not thy selfe, if thou seest others honoured & advanced, and thy selfe contemned and debased. Lift vp thy hart vnto me in heauen, and the contempt of men in earth will not grieue thee. Lord, we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanity.

vanity. If I looke well into my ſelfe, I cannot ſay, that any creature hath done me wrong, and therfore I cannot iuſtly complaine of thee.

2. But becauſe I haue often and grieuouſly ſinned againſt thee, all creatures do iuſtly take armes againſt me: for ſhame and contempt is due vnto me, but vnto thee praiſe, honour, and glory. And vnleſſe I do ſo prepare my ſelfe, that I be willing, & do reioice to be deſpiſed & forſaken of all creatures, and to be eſteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtaine internall ſtrength and peace, nor be ſpiritually enlightned, nor wholy vnited vnto thee.

CHAP. XLII.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

SONNE, if the peace thou haſt with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou haſt of him, or on the

the contentment thou receaueſt in his company, thou ſhalt euer be vnconſtant and ſubiect to diſquiet: but if thou haue recourſe vnto the euerliuing and eternall Truth, a friend going trō thee or dying ſhall not grieue thee. The loue of thy friend ought to reſt in me, and for me is he to be beloued, whoſoeuer he be, whome thou thinkeſt well of, and is verily deare vnto thee in this life. No friēdſhip can auaile, or continue without me; neither is the loue true and pure, which they haue, whoſe hartes are not ioyned togeather by me. Thou oughteſt to be ſo dead to ſuch affections of beloued friends, that (forasmuch as appertaineth vnto thee) thou ſhouldeſt wiſh to be without all cōpany of men. Man approacheth ſo much the neerer vnto God, by how much the further off he departeth from al earthly comfort: ſo much the higher alſo he aſcendeth vnto God, by how much lower he deſcendeth into himſelfe, and how much the baſer he is in his owne conceipt.

2. But

2. But he that attributeth any good vnto himselfe, hindreth the comming of Gods grace into him. For the grace of the holy Ghost euer seeketh an hũble hart If thou couldst perfectly anihilate thy selfe, & purge thy self of al created loue, then should there flow into thee great aboũdance of my grace. When thou casteſt thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creatour is taken from thee. Learne to ouercome thy selfe in al things, for the loue of thy Creatour; and then shalt thou be able to attaine to heauenly knowledge. How little soeuer it be, if it be inordinately loued and regarded, it defileth the soule, and hindreth the enioying of the chiefeſt good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vaine and secular Knowledge.

SONNE, let not the faire speaches and subtile sayings of men moue thee,

thee. For the Kingdome of God consisteth not in words, but in vertue. Obserue well the wordes which I speake: for they inflame the hart, and enlighen the mind, induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts. Do thou neuer read to shew thy selfe learned or wise: but labour to mortify thy vices, for that will profit thee more, then the knowledg of many hard and difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt haue read & knowne many things, thou oughtest euer to returne to one beginning. I am he, that teacheth man all knowledge: and do giue to little ones a more cleare vnderstanding, then can be taught by man. He therfore, to whome I speake, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in spirit. Woe be to them, that inquire many curious things of men, & do little desire to know the way how to serue me. The time will come, when the Maister shall appeare, Christ the Lord of Angells, to heare the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences

ciences of euery one one: and then he will ſearch Hieruſalem with a candle, and the hidden things of darkeneſſe ſhall be laid open, and the inuentions of tongues ſhall be ſilent.

3. I am he that in an inſtant do raiſe vp the humble mind, to vnderſtand more reaſons of the euerlaſting truth, then can be gotten by ten yeares ſtudy in ſchools. I teach without noiſe of words, without confuſion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to deſpiſe earthly things, to loath things preſent, to ſeeke the euerlaſting, to delight in the things that are eternal, to fly honours, to ſuffer ſcandalls, to place al hope in me, to deſire nothing out of me, and aboue all things feruently to loue me.

4. For one by louing me entirely, learned diuine things, and ſpake wonders: he profited more in forſaking all things, then in ſtudying ſubtilities. To ſome I ſpeake ordinary things, to others, things more eſpe-

ciall,

ciall: to some I appeare sweetly by signes and figures, but to some I reueale mysteries with much light. The voice of bookes is one, but it teacheth not all men alike. For I am the internall teacher, I am the Truth the searcher of the hart, the vnderstander of thoughts, the setter forwards of good works, distributing to euery one according to my will.

CHAP. XLIIII.

Of not drawing outward things to our selues.

SONNE, in many things thou oughtest to be ignorant, and esteeme thy selfe as dead vpon earth: & as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou must also passe ouer many things with a deafe eare, and rather thinke of that, which appertaineth to thy peace. It is more profitable to turne thine eyes from the sight of vnpleasing things, and to leaue

leaue vnto euery one his owne opinion, then to striue with contentious wordes. If thou standest well with God, and considerest his iudgments, thou shalt the more easily yield to the will of others.

2. O Lord, to what an estate are we come! Behold, we bewaile a temporall losse, and for a little gaine we toyle and spare no labour, & the spirituall domage of our soule is forgottē, & hardly at length called to mind. That which little or nothing profiteth, is alwaies remembred, and that which is chiefly necessary, is negligētly passed ouer, because mans nature carrieth him to externall things; and vnlesse he quickly returne vnto himselfe, he lyeth drowned in them with delight.

Spiritual Domage

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

That credit is not to be giuen to all men: and how prone man is to offend in words.

HELP me Lord, in my tribulation, for vaine is the defence of man. How often haue I bene deceaued, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure? And how often haue I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vaine therefore to trust in men; but the safety of the iust, O Lord is in thee. Blessed be thou my God, in all thinges that befall vs. We are weake and inconstanst, quickly deceaued, and soone changed.

2. Who is he, that is able so warily to keep himselfe, that he neuer fall into any deceipt or doubt? But he that trusteth in thee, O Lord, & seeketh with a pure hart, doth not easily fall; and if he fall into any tribulation, be he neuer so much inthralled, yet

yet he ſhall quickly be deliuered or conforted by thee. For thou wilt not forſake him for euer that truſteth in thee. The friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithful in his freinds diſtreſſe: but thou, O Lord, thou alone art faithfull at all times, & there is none like vnto thee.

3. O how wiſe was that holy ſoule that ſaid: My mind is firmely ſetled and grounded in Chriſt! If it were ſo with me, then would not humane feare ſo eaſily trouble me, nor words moue me. Who can foreſee all things? Who is able to beware before hand of future euills? If things euen foreſeene do oftentimes hurt vs, how can things vnlooked for chooſe but wound vs grieuouſly? But why did I not prouide better for my ſelfe, miſerable wretch? Why alſo haue I ſo eaſily giuen credit to others? But alas we are men, & God knoweth, weake and fraile men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whome ſhall I giue credit Lord? to whome but to thee? Thou art the truth

truth that neither doest deceaue, nor canst be deceaued. And on the other side, euery man is a liar, weake, vnconstant, and subiect to fall, especially in words: and therefore we must not easily giue credit euen to that, which in outward shew seemeth at the first a certaine truth.

4. O with how great wisedome hast thou warned vs to take heed of men! And because the enemies of man are his familiar and domestical acquaintance, not to trust, if one should say: Behould heere, or behould there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby increase my care, and not my folly. Be wary, sayth one, be wary, keep vnto thy selfe what I tell thee: and whilst I hould my peace, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloseth me and himselfe, and goeth his way. From such tales, and such improuident people, protect me Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor euer com-

mit ſuch errours. Giue me grace my God to obſerue truth, and conſtancy in my words, and remoue far from me a deceiptfull tongue. What I am not willing to ſuffer, I ought by all meanes to auoid.

5. O how good & quiet a thing it is to be ſilent, and not to talke of others, nor to belieue all that is ſaid, nor eaſily to report what we haue heard; to lay ones ſelfe open to few; alwayes to ſeeke after thee, the beholder of the hart; not to be carried about with euery wind of wordes, but to deſire that all thinges both within & without, be accompliſhed according to thy will and pleaſure. How ſecure is it for the keeping of heauenly grace, to fly the ſight of men? And not to ſeeke thoſe things, that ſeeme to cauſe admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and increaſe of feruour.

6. To how many hath vertue, knowne and ouer haſtily commended beene hurtfull? How profitable hath

hath grace beene, kept with ſilence in this mortall life, which is nothing but a perpetual tentation, and a warfare?

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our truſt in God, when euill words ariſe.

SONNE, be conſtant, and put thy trnſt in me. For what are wordes, but wordes? They paſſe through the ayre, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thy ſelfe: if thou be innocent, reſolue to ſuffer this willingly, at leaſt for God. It is a ſmall matter to ſuffer ſometimes a few words, if thou haſt not yet the courage to endure ſtripes. And why do ſmal matters go to thy hart, but for that thou art yet carnall, and regardeſt men more then thou oughteſt? Becauſe thou art afraid to be deſpiſed, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and therefore ſeekeſt ſhaddowes of excuſes.

2. But looke better into thy self and thou shalt see, that the world yet liueth in thee, and a vaine desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled, and reproued for thy faults, it is surely euident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee. But giue diligent eare to my words, and thou shalt litle respect ten thousand words spoken by mē. Behould, if al should be spokē against thee that could be most maliciously inuented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferedst it to passe, and madest no reckoning at al of it? could al those words pluck as much as one haire from thy head?

3. But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes is easily moued with euery little dispraysе, when as he that trusteth in me, and confideth not in his owne iudgement, shall be free from humane feares. For I am the Iudge and the discerner of all secrets. I know how the matter passed, I know him that

that offereth the iniury, and him that ſuffereth it. From me hath this word proceeded: this hath happened by my permiſſiō, that out of many harts thoughts may be reuealed. I ſhall iudge the guilty & the innocent, but by a ſecret iudgmēt I would beforehand try them both.

4. The teſtimony of men oftentymes deceaueth: my iudgment is alwaies true, it ſhall ſtand, and not be ouerthrowne. It is cōmonly hidden and ſecret, and not known in euery thing but to few: notwithſtanding it neuer erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the fooliſh it ſeemes not right. Men ought therefore to returne to me in euery iudgment, and not to ſtand in their owne opinions. For the iuſt man will not be troubled, whatſoeuer happeneth vnto him for God: and if any thing be wrongfully brought forth againſt him, he will not much care, neither will he vainely be glad, if by others he be with reaſon excuſed. For he cōſidereth that I am he, that ſearcheth

the hart & reines, & do iudg, not according to the outward face, nor humane apparēce. For that is oftētymes found culpable in my ſight, that in the iudgment of men is cōmendable.

5. O Lord my God, the iuſt Iudge, ſtrong & patient, thou knoweſt the frailty and perverſity of man, be thou my ſtrength, & all my truſt, for mine owne conſcience ſufficeth me not. Thou knoweſt that which I cannot reach vnto, and therfore in euery reprehenſion I ought to haue ſubmitted my ſelfe, & to haue borne it patiently: vouchſafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I haue fayled heerein, and giue me againe grace of greater ſufferance. For thy bountifull mercy is more auaylable to me for the obtayning of pardon, then my conceaued iuſtice for the defence of my hidden conſcience. Although my conſcience accuſe me not, yet I cannot hereby iuſtifie my ſelfe; for if thy mercy be away, no man liuing ſhalbe iuſtified in thy ſight.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all grieuous thinges are to be endured for life euerlasting.

SONNE, let not the paynes dismay thee which thou hast vndertaken for me, neither be thou discõforted for the tribulatiõs which do befall thee; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in al euents. I am able to reward thee aboue al measure. Thou shalt not long toile here, nor alwayes be oppressed with griefe. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy euills. There will come an houre when all labour and trouble shall cease. Little & short is all that passeth away with tyme.

2. Doe as thou doest, labour faithfully in my vineyard, I will be thy reward. Write, read, sing, mourne, obserue silence, pray, suffer crosses mãfully: life euerlasting is worthy of all these & greater cõbats.

Peace ſhall come in the day which is knowne vnto our Lord, and it ſhall not be day nor night, to wit, of this tyme, but euerlaſting light, infinite brightneſſe, ſtedfaſt peace, and ſecure reſt. Then thou ſhalt not ſay, Who ſhall deliuer me from the body of this death? nor cry, Wo be vnto me, for that my dwelling in a ſtrange countrey is prolonged! For death ſhall be throwne downe, and health ſhall be without decay, no anxiety, bleſſed ioy, ſweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadſt ſeene the euerlaſting crowns of the Saints in heauen, and with how great glory they now reioyce who in tymes paſt were contẽptible to this world, and eſteemed vnworthy of life it ſelfe; truly thou wouldeſt preſently humble thy ſelfe euen vnto the earth: & wouldeſt rather ſeeke to be vnder the feet of all, then to haue command, ſo much as ouer one: neither wouldſt thou deſire pleaſant dayes of this life, but rather reioyce to be afflicted for God, and

eſteeme

esteeme it thy greatest gaine to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy hart, how durst thou so much as once to complaine! Are not al paineful labours to be endured for euerlasting life? It is no smal matter to leese or to gain the Kingdome of heauen. Lift vp thine eyes therefore vnto heauen: behould I, and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great cõflicts, do now reioyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now do rest, and shall remaine with me euerlastingly in the Kingdome of my Father.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the euerlasting day, and shortnesse of this life.

O Most blessed mansion of the heauenly Citty! O most cleare day of Eternity, which night obscureth not, but the highest truth euer

enlightneth, day euer pleasant, euer secure, and neuer changing into contrary state! O that, that day would once appeare, and all these temporall things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glistering with euerlasting brightnesse, but to those that are Pilgrimes vpon earth, it appeareth only a far off, and as it were through a glasse.

2. The inhabitants of heauen doe know how ioyfull that day is: but the banished Children of Eue bewaile the bitternes and tediousnes of this. The dayes of this life are short and euill, full of sorrow & anguish, where man is defiled with many sinnes, incumbred with many passiõs, disquieted with many feares, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errours, worne away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want

3. O when shall these euills be at an

an end! When ſhall I be deliuered from the miſerable bondage of ſin? When ſhall I thinke, O Lord of thee alone! When ſhall I perfectly reioyce in thee! When ſhall I be free from al impediments in true liberty, without all griefe of mind and body! When ſhall I haue firme peace, peace ſecure, and without trouble, peace within and without, peace euery way aſſured! O good Ieſu, when ſhal I ſtand to behould thee! When ſhall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdome! When wilt thou be vnto me all in all things! O when ſhall I be with thee in thy Kingdome, which thou haſt prepared for thy beloued, from before all worldes! I am left a poore and baniſhed man in the land of mine enemies, where there are daily warres, and great misfortunes.

4. Comfort my baniſhment, aſſwage my ſorrow: for my whole deſire ſendeth vp ſighes vnto thee. For all is burdenſome to me, whatſoeuer this world offereth for my cõfort. I deſire familiarly to enioy thee,

but I cannot attaine vnto it. I would gladly fixe my hart to the thinges of heauen, but temporall cares and vnmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be aboue al things, but to my flesh I am inforced to be subiect against my wil. Thus vnhappy man that I am, I fight against my selfe, and am become grieuous to my selfe, whilst my spirit seeketh after the things that are aboue, and my flesh that which is below.

5. O what do I inwardly suffer, when in mind I consider heauenly things, and presently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantasies present themselues before me! My God, be not farre from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy seruant. Cast forth thy lightning, and disperse them: send out thy darts, and breake all the fantasies of my enemy. Gather my senses togeather vnto thee, make me forget the thinges of this world: grant me grace to cast away speedily the fantasies of vices Succour me, o euerlasting truth, that no vanity may

mooue me. Come heauenly ſweetneſſe, & let all impurity fly from thy face. Pardon me alſo, and mercifully forgiue me as often as I think vpō any thing els beſides thee in praier. I truely confeſſe, that I am wont to be ſubiect to many diſtractions: for oftentimes I am not there, where I do corporally ſtand, or ſit, but rather there, whither my thoughts do carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: there is oftentimes my thought, where my affection is. That quickly occurreth vnto me, which is naturally delightſome, and by cuſtome pleaſing.

6. And for this cauſe, thou that art truth it ſelfe, haſt plainely ſaid. Where thy treaſure is, there is alſo thy hart. If I loue heauen, I willingly think of heauenly things. If I loue the world, I reioyce at the felicity of the world, and grieue for the aduerſity therof. If I loue the fleſh, I imagine oftentimes thoſe thinges, that are pleaſing to the fleſh: if I loue the ſpirit, I delight to think of ſpirituall things

things For whatſoeuer I loue, thereof do I willingly ſpeake, and heare, and carry home with me the formes & repreſentations therof. O bleſſed is that mā, that for thee, o Lord, forſaketh al creatures; that violently reſiſteth nature, & out of the feruour of ſpirit crucifieth the cōcupiſcences of the fleſh: that with a cleare conſcience he may offer ſincere prayers vnto thee, and be worthy of the company of the angelicall quiers, all earthly things outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the deſire of euerlaſting life, and how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe that fight valiantly.

SONNE, when thou perceaueſt the deſire of euerlaſting bliſſe to be giuen thee from aboue, and deſireſt to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body,

body, that thou maiſt without ſhaddow of any interchange behould my light; open thy hart, and receaue this holy inſpiration with thy whole deſire. Giue great thanks to the heauenly goodneſſe, that dealeth with thee ſo fauourably, viſiteth thee mercifully, ſtirreth thee vp feruently, houldeth thee vp powerfully, leaſt through thine owne weight thou fall down to the vanities of the earth. Neither doeſt thou obtaine this by thine owne thought or endeauour, but by the only fauour of heauenly grace & diuine bounty, that thou maiſt profit in vertue, and obtaine greater humility, and prepare thy ſelf to future battailes, and endeauour to cleaue vnto me with the whole affection of thy hart, and ſerue me with a feruent deſire.

2. Sonne, fire often burneth, but the flame aſcendeth not vp without ſmoke: ſo likewiſe the deſires of ſome men are earneſtly carried to heauenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnall affection:

ction: and therfore it is not altogeather purely for the honour of God that which they so earnestly request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire, which with such importunity thou presentest vnto me. For that is not pure and perfect, which is infected and defiled with the loue of thine owne proper commodity and intereſt.

3. Aske not that which is delightsome and profitable to thee, but that which is gratefull to me, and appertaineth to my honour, for if thou iudgest aright, thou oughtest to preferre and follow my appointment, rather then thine owne desire, or any desired thing. I know thy desire, & haue heard thy often grones. Now thou wouldest be in the freedome of the glory of the Sonnes of God: now doth the euerlasting habitation, and the heauenly Country full of ioy delight thee, but this houre is not yet come: it is yet another time, to wit, of warre, time of labour and triall. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest

chiefeſt good, but thou canſt not attaine it for the preſent. I am he, ſaith our Lord, expect vntil the Kingdome of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed vpon earth, & to be exerciſed in many things. Comfort ſhall be ſometimes giuen thee, but aboundant fulnes therof ſhal not be granted. Take courage therfore, and be conſtant as well in doing, as in ſuffering things contrary to nature. Thou oughteſt to put on a new man, and to changed into another. Thou muſt oftentimes do that which thou wouldeſt not, & leaue vndone that thou wouldeſt do. That which is pleaſing to others, ſhal go well forwards, that which thou wiſheſt, ſhall not ſpeed. That which others ſay, ſhall be nothing regarded. Others ſhall aſke, and ſhall receaue, thou ſhalt aske & not obtaine.

5. Others ſhall be great in the praiſes of men, but of thee there ſhall be no ſpeach: to others this or that ſhall be committed, but thou ſhalt be accompted fit for nothing. At this

nature

nature will ſomtimes repine, and it is much if thou endureſt it with ſilence. In theſe and ſuch like, a faithfull ſeruant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny and ouercome himſelfe in all things. There is ſcarce any thing, wherein thou haſt ſuch need to mortify thy ſelfe, as in ſeeing and ſuffering thoſe things that are contrary to thy will, eſpecially when that is commanded, which ſeemeth vnto thee inconuenient, or to little purpoſe. And for that thou being placed vnder authority, dareſt not reſiſt a higher power, therfore it ſeemeth hard vnto thee, to walke at the becke of another, & to leaue wholy thine owne opinion.

6. But conſider, Sonne, the fruit of theſe labours, the end neere at hand, and the reward aboue all meaſure, and thou ſhalt receaue no griefe therby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will, which now thou willingly forſakeſt, thou ſhalt alwaies haue thy will in heauen. There thou ſhalt haue all

all that thou wilt, or canſt deſire: there thou ſhalt enioy all good without feare of looſing it, there ſhall thy will be euer one with me; it ſhall deſire nothing, ſtrange or priuate; there no man ſhall withſtand thee, no man complaine of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come againſt thee: but all things deſired ſhall be there togeather preſent, and delight thy whole deſire, and fulfill it to the higheſt degree: there I will giue thee glory for the reproach which heere thou ſuffereдſt; a garment of praiſe for former griefe; for the loweſt place, a ſeat of an euerlaſting Kingdome; there ſhall the fruite of obedience appeare, the labour of pennance reioyce, and humble ſubiection ſhalbe glorioufly crowned.

7. Now therfore bow thy ſelfe with great humility vnder the hands of all, & regard not who ſaid, or commaunded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy Inferiour, or thine equall require any thing of thee, or doe inſinuate their

their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeauour to fulfill it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that, let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but do thou neither reioyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thy selfe, and in my pleasure & honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be alwaies glorified in thee.

CHAP. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himselfe into the hands of God

LORD God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for euer blessed; because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest, is good. Let thy seruant reioyce in thee, not in himselfe, nor any thing els, for thou alone art the true gladnes, thou art my hope and my crown, thou art my ioy

ioy and my honour, o Lord. What hath thy ſeruant, but what he hath receaued from thee, euen without any deſert of his? Thine is all that thou haſt giuen, & whatſoeuer thou haſt made. I am poore, and in labours from my youth: and ſometymes my ſoule is heauy euen vnto teares, ſomtimes alſo it is troubled in it ſelfe, by reaſon of paſſions which riſe againſt her.

2. I deſire the ioy of peace, I craue the peace of thy children that are fed by thee in the light of comfort. If thou giue peace, if thou infuſe holy ioy, the ſoule of thy ſeruant ſhall be full of heauenly ſweetnes, & ſhall become deuout in thy praiſe: but if thou withdraw thy ſelfe, as very often thou art wont, he will not be able to runne the waies of thy commandments, but rather he boweth his knees, and knocketh his breaſt, for that it is not with him, as it was yeſterday, and the day before, when thy light ſhined vpon his head, and he was protected vnder the ſhaddow

of

of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father, and euer to be prayſed, the houre is come, that thy ſeruant is to be proued: Behould Father, it is fit, that in this houre thy ſeruant ſuffer ſomething for thee. O Father worthy of eternall honour, the houre is come, which from all eternity thou dideſt foreknow ſhould come: that for a ſhort tyme thy ſeruant ſhould outwardly be oppreſſed, but inwardly liue for euer with thee: he ſhould be a little deſpiſed, and humbled, and made as an abiect in the ſight of men, and much afflicted with paſſions & infirmities, that he may riſe againe with thee, in the riſing of new light, and be clarified in heauen. Holy Father, thou haſt ſo appointed it, and wilt haue it ſo: and this is fullfilled which thy ſelfe haſt commanded.

4. It is a grace and a fauour to thy friend to ſuffer, and to be afflicted in the world for the loue of thee, how often ſoeuer, and by whom-

whomsoeuer thou permittest it to fall vpon him. Without thy counsell and prouidence, and without cause nothing is done in earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learne thy righteous iudgments, and cast away all haughtines of hart & presumptiō. It is profitable to me, that shame hath couered my face, that I may rather seeke to thee for comfort, then to men. I haue learned allso heereby to dread thy inscrutable iudgment, that afflictest the iust with the wicked, but not without equity and iustice.

5. I giue thee thankes, that thou hast not spared my sinnes, but hast worne me away with bitter stripes, inflicting sorrows, and sending griefs within and without. There is none vnder heauen that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heauenly Phisitian of soules, that strikest & healest, bringest into hell, and drawst out againe: let thy correction be vpon me, and let thy rod instruct me.

6. Behould beloued Father, I am

am in thy hands, I bow my selfe vnder the rod of thy correction: let my neck and shoulders feele the stripes of thy chastisement, that my crookednesse may be conformed to thy will. Make me a deuout and humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont wel to do, that I may be ready at euery becke of thy diuin pleasure. I commend my selfe & all mine vnto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked heere, then heerafter. Thou knowest all and euery thing, & there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knowest that they will happen, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sinns. Do with me according to thy desired pleasure, and despise not my sinfull life, better and more clearly knowne to none then to thee alone.

7. Graunt

7. Graunt me, Lord, to know that which is to be knowne, to loue that, which is to be beloued, to praise that which pleaseth thee most: to esteeme that which is precious vnto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight: suffer me not to iudge according to the sight of the exteriour eyes, nor to giue sentence according to the hearing of the eares of ignorant men; but to determine of visible & spirituall things with a true iudgment, & aboue all things euer to search after thy will and pleasure.

8. The senses of men are often deceaued in their iudgments: the louers of the world are also deceaued in louing only visible things. What is a man the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceiptfull man deceaueth the deceiptfull, the vaine the vaine, the blind deceaueth the blind, and one feeble likwise another, whilst he exalteth and praiseth him. For how much euery one is in thy sight, so much he is, and no more, sayth humble S. Francis.

CHAP. LI.

That a man ought to imploy himselfe in workes of humility, when force is wanting for higher exercises.

SONNE, thou art not able alwaies to continue in the feruent desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation, but thou must sometimes of necessity by reason of originall corruption descend to inferiour things, and beare the burthen of this corruptible life euen against thy will, and with irksomenes. As thou carriest a mortall body, thou shalt feele trouble and heauines of hart. Thou oughtest therefore in flesh oftentimes to bewaile the burthen of flesh: for that thou canst not alwaies perseuere in spirituall exercises, and diuine contemplation

[illegible] is then expedient for thee to [illegible] and exteriour works, and so refresh thy selfe with good & vertuous

vertuous actions, to expect with a firme confidence my comming, and heauenly visitation, to beare patiently thy banishment, and the drinesse of thy mind, till thou bee visited againe by me, and deliuered from all anxiety. For, I will make thee forget thy former paines, and enioy inward quietnes. I will lay open before thee the pleasant fieldes of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged hart thou maist begin to run the way of my commaundments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of this time are not condigne to the glory to come, that shall be reuealed in vs.

CHAP. LII.

That a man ought not to esteeme himselfe vnworthy of comfort, and to haue deserued stripes.

LORD, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spirituall visitation, and therfore thou dealest iu-

ſtly with me, me, when thou leaueſt me poore and deſolate. For if I could ſheed teares like a ſea, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort. For (alas) I deſerue nothing, but to be ſcourged and puniſhed, in that I haue grieuouſly and often offended thee, and ſinned in many thinges. All things therfore duely conſidered, I am not worthy euen of the leaſt comfort. But thou mild and mercifull God, who wilt not that thy workes do periſh, to ſhew the riches of thy goodneſſe in the veſſels of mercy, euen beyond his deſert, vouchſafeſt to comfort thy ſeruant aboue humane meaſure. For thy comforts are not like to the vaine words of men.

2. What haue I done, o Lord, that thou ſhouldeſt impart any heauenly comfort vnto me? I remember not, that I haue euer done any good, but haue bene alwayes prone to ſinne, and ſlouthfull in my amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it. If I ſhould ſay otherwiſe, thou wouldeſt ſtand againſt me, and there would

would be none to defend me. What haue I deſerued for my ſinnes, but hell and euerlaſting fire? I confeſſe in the truth of my hart that I am worthy of all ſcorne and contempt, and it is vnfit that I ſhould be remẽbred amongſt thy deuout ſeruants. And although I be vnwilling to heare this, yet notwithſtanding for the loue of truth, I will lay open my ſinnes againſt my ſelfe, that I may the better deſerue to obtaine thy mercy.

3. What ſhall I ſay being guilty, and full of confuſion? I can vtter out of my mouth no other word, but this; I haue ſinned, Lord, I haue ſinned, haue mercy on me: pardon me, ſuffer me a little, that I may bewaile my griefe, before I go vnto the land of darkneſſe, & be couered with the ſhaddow of death. What doeſt thou require of a guilty & miſerable ſinner, but that he be contrite and ſorrowfull, and do humble himſelfe for his offences? In true contrition & humblenes of hart, is bred a hope of forgiuenes; a troubled conſcience is

reconciled againe, grace loſt is reſtored, man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent ſoule meet togeather in the holy kiſſe of peace.

4. Humble contrition for ſinns is an acceptable ſacrifice vnto thee, o Lord, ſauouring much ſweeter in thy ſight thē burning frankincenſe. This is alſo the pleaſant oyntment, which thou wouldeſt hauè powred vpon thy ſacred feet, for thou neuer deſpiſeſt a contrite & humble hart. There is a place of refuge frō the face of the wrath of our enemy: there is amended, and waſhed away whatſoeuer vncleanes hath bene elſwhere gathered, & whatſoeuer is defiled.

CHAP. LIII.

That the grace of God is not giuen to thoſe that ſauour of earthly things.

SONNE my grace is precious, it ſuffereth not it ſelfe to be mingled with externall things, nor earthly comforts.

comforts. Thou oughteſt therfore to caſt away all hinderances of grace, if thou deſire to receaue the infuſion therof. Chooſe therfore a ſecret place to thy ſelfe, loue to liue alone with thy ſelfe, deſire the conuerſation of none: but rather powre out deuout praiers vnto God, that thou maiſt keep thy mind compunct, and thy conſcience pure. Eſteeme the whole world as nothing: preferre my ſeruice before all outward things: for thou canſt not attend vnto me, and be delighted alſo in tranſitory vanities. Thou oughteſt to ſequeſter thy ſelfe frō thy acquaintance & friends, and to keep thy mind depriued of all temporall cōfort. So the bleſſed Apoſtle Peter required, that the faithfull of Chriſt ſhould keep themſelues as ſtrangers & Pilgrims in this world.

3. O how greater a confidence ſhall he haue at the houre of death, whome no affection to any earthly thing detaineth in the world. But the weake mind is not yet capable of ſo retired a hart; neither doth the fleſhly

perſon vnderſtand the freedome of a recollected mind. Notwithſtanding if he wilbe truly ſpiritual, he ought to renounce as well that which is farre off, as that which is neereſt vnto him, and to beware of no man more then of himſelfe. If thou perfectly ouercome thy ſelfe, thou ſhalt with more eaſe ſubdue the reſt. It is a glorious victory to triumph ouer our ſelues. For he that keepeth himſelfe ſubiect inſuch ſort, that his ſenſuality be ſubdued to reaſon, & reaſon in all things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerour of himſelfe, and Lord of the world.

3. If thou deſire to mount vnto this height of perfection, thou muſt begin manfully, and ſet the axe to the root, that thou maiſt plucke vp & deſtroy thy hidden and inordinat inclination to thy ſelfe, and vnto all priuate and earthly good. Of this vice (that man too inordinately loueth himſelfe) almoſt all dependeth, whatſoeuer is wholy to be ouercome: which being once ouercome and ſubdued,

dued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquillity. But for that few endeauour perfectly to dye vnto themselues, and to forsake themselues wholy, therfore they remaine intangled in themselues, and cannot be lifted vp in spirit aboue themselues; but he that desireth to walke freely with me, it is necessary that he mortify all his inordinate affections, and not adhere vnto any creature by priuate loue.

CHAP. LIV.

Of the different motions of Nature, and Grace.

SONNE, marke diligently the motions of thine owne nature, and my grace, for in very contrary and secret manner these are moued, and can hardly be discerned but by him that is spirituall and inwardly enlighned. All men desire that which is good, and pretend some good in all

their words and deeds, and therfore vnder pretence of good, many are deceaued. Nature is deceiptfull and seduceth, intangleth, and deceaueth many, and alwaies propoſeth her ſelfe for her end; but grace walketh with great ſincerity, and auoideth al ſhew of euill, pretendeth not deceipts, and doth all things purely for God, in whome alſo ſhe finally reſteth.

2. Nature will not willingly dye, nor be kept in, nor ouercome, nor be ſubiect to any, nor be ſubdued: but grace laboureth to mortify her ſelfe, reſiſteth ſenſuality, ſeeketh to be ſubiect, is willing to be ouercome, nal will not vſe her owne liberty, ſhe loueth to be kept vnder diſcipline, & deſireth not to rule any, but alwaies to liue and remaine wholy ſubiect vnto God, and for God is ready humbly to bow vnto all men. Nature ſtriueth for her owne commodity, and cõſidereth what profit ſhe may reape by another: but grace conſidereth not what is profitable and commodious

vnto

vnto herſelfe, but rather what is profitable to many. Nature willingly receaueth honour and reuerence: but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory vnto God.

3. Nature feareth ſhame and contempt, but grace reioyceth to ſuffer reproach for the name of Ieſus. Nature loueth idlenes, and bodily reſt, but grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature ſeeketh to haue thoſe things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is meane and baſe: but grace delighteth in plaine & hũble things, deſpiſeth not courſe and meane, nor refuſeth to wear that which is old & torne. Nature reſpecteth the things of this world, reioyceth at earthly gaine, ſorroweth for loſſe, is moued with euery little iniurious word; but grace thinketh on that, which is euerlaſting, and cleaueth not to that which fadeth with time: ſhe is not troubled with loſſe, nor exaſperated with iniuries, for that ſhe hath placed her treaſure and ioy in heauen,

where nothing periſheth.

4. Nature is couetous, and doth more willingly receaue then giue, ſhe loueth proper and priuate things; but grace is pittifull and liberall to all, anoydeth ſingularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to giue, then to receaue. Nature inclineth to creatures, yieldeth to her owne fleſh, followeth vanities, & liſteneth to diſcourſes: but grace draweth vnto God, and ſeeketh after vertues, renoũceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth deſires of the fleſh, reſtraineth wandrings abroad, bluſheth to be ſeene in publike. Nature is wiliing to haue ſome outward comfort, wherin ſhe may delight her ſenſes, but grace ſeeketh comfort in God alone, & delighteth aboue al viſible things in the higheſt good.

5. Nature worketh all for her owne gaine and profit, ſhe can doe nothing freely, but for beſtowed benefits: ſhe hopeth to obtaine either that which is equall, or better, either praiſe or fauour, & coueteth to haue

her

her workes & gifts much esteemed: but grace seeketh no temporal thing, nor asketh any other reward for her deserts then God alone, nor desiteth more of temporall necessaries, then what may serue her for the obtayning of euerlasting glory.

6. Nature reioyceth to haue many friends, and kinsfolkes, she glorieth of Noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerfull, fawneth vpon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herselfe: but grace loueth her enemies, and is not puffed vp with multitude of friends, nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is ioyned with greater vertue; she rather fauoureth the poore, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the powerfull, reioyceth in the simple, & respecteth not the deceiptfull, exhorteth euer the good to labour for the better gifts, and by vertue to resemble the sonne of God. Nature quickly cõplaineth of any want & trouble: grace constantly suffereth all kind of need.

7. Nature

7. Nature turneth all things to her ſelfe, ſtriueth and contendeth for her ſelfe: but grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed: ſhe aſcribeth no good to her ſelfe, neither doth ſhe atrogantly preſume of her ſelfe: ſhe contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in euery ſenſe and vnderſtanding ſubmitteth her ſelfe vnto the eternall wiſdome, and to the diuine iudgment. Nature coueteth to know ſecrets, and to heare newes, ſhe will appeare abroad, and make proofe of many things by the experience of her owne ſenſes, ſhe deſireth to be knowne, & to do thoſe things, for which ſhe may be praiſed and admired: but grace careth not for hearing newes, nor to vnderſtand curious matters, for that al this ſpringeth from the ancient diſorder of our corupt nature, ſeing nothing that is new, is durable vpon earth. She teacheth therfore to reſtraine the ſenſes, to auoid vayne pleaſing and oſtentation, humbly to hide thoſe things

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that are worthy of praiſe and admiration, and of euery thing and euery knowledge to ſeeke profitable fruite, and the praiſe and honour of God: ſhe will not haue her ſelfe nor hers publickly praiſed, but deſireth that God ſhould be bleſſed in his gifts, who of meere charity beſtoweth all things.

8. This grace is a ſupernatull light, and a certaine ſpeciall gift of God, and the proper marke of the elect, and pledge of euerlaſting ſaluation, which lifteth vp a man from earthly baſenes to loue things of heauen, & of a carnall maketh him a ſpirituall perſon. How much the more therfore nature is depreſſed and ſubdued, ſo much the greater grace is infuſed, and the inward man daily by new viſitations more perfected according to the Image of God.

CHAP.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of Nature, & efficacy of diuine Grace.

MY God, who of thy meere goodnes haſt created me to thy Image and likeneſſe, graunt me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo great, and ſo neceſſary to ſaluation, that I may ouercome my wicked nature, which draweth me to ſinne, & to the loſſe of my ſoule. For I feele in my fleſh the law of ſin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captiue, to obey ſenſuality in many things: neither can I reſiſt the paſſions therof, vnleſſe thy holy grace feruently infuſed into my hart do aſſiſt me.

2. Thy grace o Lord, & great grace is needfull, that nature may be ouercome, which is euer prone to euill from her youth. For by Adam the firſt man, it falling and being corrupted

rupted by ſince, the penalty of this ſtaine hath deſcended vpon all mankind, in ſuch ſort, that nature it ſelfe which by thee was created good, & without defect, is now accompted for vice, & for the infinity of a corrupted nature, for that the motion thereof left vnto it ſelfe, draweth to euill and abiect things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certaine ſparke, lying hidden in aſhes. This is naturall reaſon it ſelfe, compaſſed about with great darkneſſe, ſtill retayning power to diſcerne good and euill, and the diſtance betweene true and falſe, although it be vnable to fulfill all, that it approueth and enioyeth not now the full light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward man I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandements to be good, iuſt, and holy, reprouing alſo all euill and ſinne, and do know that it is to be fled. But in my fleſh I ſerue the law of ſin, whilſt

I rather obey ſenſuality then reaſon. Hence it is, that I haue a will to do good, but know not how to performe it. For this cauſe I often purpoſe many good things, but for that I want grace to help my infirmity, for a light reſiſtance I go back, and faint. I know the way of perfection, and ſee cleerly inough what I ought to do, but preſſed with the weight of mine owne corruption, I riſe not vnto it.

4. O Lord, how needfull is thy grace for me, to begin any good worke, to go forward, and to accompliſh it. For without it I can do nothing, but in thee I can do all things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heauenly grace, without which our owne merits are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be eſtemed. Arts riches, beauty, & ſtrength, wit, or eloquence are of no worth with thee, O Lord, without thy grace. For gifts of nature are common to good & euill, but the peculiar gift of the elect is grace and loue, wherwith being

ing marked, they are esteemed worthy of euerlasting life. This grace so much excelleth, that neither the gift of propheſy, nor the working of miracles, nor any ſpeculation, how high ſoeuer, is of any eſteeme without it. Neither faith, nor hope, nor other vertues are acceptable vnto thee without charity & grace.

5. O moſt bleſſed grace, that makeſt the poore in ſpirit rich with vertues, and the rich in many bleſſings, humble in hart, come downe vnto me, repleniſh me in the morning with thy comfort, leaſt my ſoule ſhould faint with wearines, and wither away with drineſſe of mind. I beſeech thee Lord, that I may find grace in thy ſight, for thy grace ſufficeth, though other things that nature deſireth be wanting. If I be tempted & vexed with many tribulations, I wil not feare euils whilſt thy grace is with me: ſhe is my ſtrength, ſhe giueth aduiſe and help: ſhe is ſtronger then all enemies, and wiſer then all the wiſe,

6. Thy

6. Thy grace is the mistresse of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the hart, the solace in affliction: she driueth away sorrow, she expelleth feare, she is the nurse of deuotion, the bringer forth of teares. What am I without it, but a rotten peece of wood, and an vnprofitable stalke only meet for the fire? Let thy grace therfore, Lord, alwaies preuent me, and follow me, and make me euer diligent in good works, through Iesus Christ thy Sonne, Amen.

CHAP. LVI.

That we ought to deny our selues, and imitate Christ, by the Crosse.

SONNE, looke how much thou canst go out of thy selfe, so much maist thou enter into me. As to be void of all desire of externall things, maketh inward peace; so the forsaking of our selues ioyneth vs internally to God. I will haue thee learne the

the perfect leauing of thy selfe vnto my will, without contradiction and complaint. Follow me, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Without the way there is no going, without truth there is no knowledge, without life there is no liuing. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow, the truth which thou oughtest to trust, the life for which thou oughtest to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amisse, the truth which cannot erre, the life which cannot end. I am a most strait way, a supreme truth, a true life, a blessed life, an increated life. If thou remayne in me, thou shalt know the truth, and truth shall deliuer thee, and thou shalt apprehend euerlasting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commaundements: if thou wilt know the truth, belieue me. If thou wilt be perfect, sell all. If thou wilt be my disciple, deny thy selfe. If thou wilt possesse a blessed life, despise this present life. If thou wilt be exalted in heauen, humble thy

thy self vpō earth. If thou wilt raigne with me, beare the crosse with me. For only the seruants of the crosse find the way of blisse and true light.

3. Lord Iesus, forasmuch as thy way is narrow, strait and contemptible vnto the world, graunt me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all worldly contempt. For the seruant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple aboue his Maister. Let thy seruant be exercised in thy holy life, for there is the health and the true sanctity of my soule: whatsoeuer I read or heare besides, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

4. Sonne, now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfill them. He that hath my commandements and keepeth them, he it is that loueth me, and I will loue him, and will manifest my selfe vnto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdome of my Father. Lord Iesus, as thou hast said and promised, so giue me grace to deserue, that it be

be fulfilled. I haue receaued the Crosse, I haue receaued it from thy hand, & I will beare it, & beare it till death, as thou hast laid it vpon me. Truly the life of a good religious person is the crosse, & it is a sure guide to heauen. It is now begunne, it is not lawfull to go back, neither is it fit to leaue that which I haue vndertaken.

5. Let vs then take courage my brethren, & go forwards togeather. Iesus will be with vs, for Iesus sake we haue vndertaken this crosse: for the loue of Iesus let vs perseuere in the crosse. He will be our helper, who is our guid & forerunner. Behould our King goeth before vs, who also will fight for vs: let vs follow him cheerfully, let vs not be dismaied, but be ready to dye with courage in the battaile, & let vs not blemish our glory by flying from the Crosse.

CHAP.

CHAP. LVII.

That a man be not too much dejected, when he falleth into some defects.

SONNE, patieence and humility in time of aduersity, are more pleasing to me, then much comfort and deuotion in prosperity. Why art thou grieued for euery little trifle spoken and done against thee? Although it had bene much more, thou oughtest not to haue bene moued. But now let it passe, it is not the first that hath happened, nor any new thing, neither shall it be the last, if thou liue long. Thou art cheerfull inough, as long as no aduersity occurreth. Thou canst giue good counsaile also, and canst strengthen others with thy words, but when any tribulation suddainly knocketh at thy doore, thou art destitute of counsell, and voyd of force. See therefore

therefore thy great frailty, which thou often proueſt in euery ſmall occaſion. It is notwithſtanding permitted for thy good, when theſe & ſuch like occaſions befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy hart the beſt thou canſt, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deiect thee, nor trouble thee long: beare it at leaſt patiently, if thou canſt not ioyfully. Although thou be vnwilling to heare it and feeleſt in thy hart ſome motion of diſdaine, yet repreſſe thy ſelfe, and ſuffer no inordinate word to paſſe out of thy mouth, which may be a ſcandall to the weake. The ſtorne which now is raiſed, ſhall quickly be appeaſed, and inward griefe ſhall be aſſwaged by the returne of grace. I do yet liue, ſaith our Lord, and am ready to help thee, and to giue thee greater comfort then before, if thou put thy truſt in me, and calleſt deuoutly vpon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy ſelfe to greater ſuffering. All is not loſt, if thou feele thy ſelfe often afflicted,

flicted, or grieuously tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: thou art flesh, not an Angell. How canst thou looke to continue euer in the same state of vertue, when an Angell in heauen hath fallen, & the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that do giue healthfull comfort to them that mourne, & do raise vp vnto my Godhead those that know their owne frailty,

4. Lord, blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet vnto my mouth then the hony, & the hony combe. What should I do in these my so great tribulations and anguish, vnlesse thou didst comfort me with thy holy, sweet, and heauenly speaches? What matter is it, how much, and what I suffer, so as I may at length attaine to the heauen of blisse? Grant me a good end, graunt me a happy passage out of this world. Be mindfull of me, my God, and direct me the straight and ready way to thy euerlasting Kingdome, Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. LVIII.

Of not ſearching into high matters, & into the ſecret iudgments of God.

SONNE, beware thou diſpute not of high matters, nor of the ſecret iudgments of God why this man is forſaken, and he aſſumed to ſo great grace: why alſo this man is ſo much afflicted and he ſo greatly aduanced. Theſe things exceed all humane power, neither can any reaſon or diſcourſe of any man ſearch out the iudgment of God. When the enemy therfore ſuggeſteth theſe things vnto thee, or ſome enuious people demand them of thee, anſwere that of the Prophet: Thou art iuſt, o Lord, and thy iudgment is right. And againe: The iudgmēts of our Lord are true and iuſtified in themſelues. My iudgments are to be feared, not to be diſcuſſed, for they are ſuch as cannot

be comprehended by the vnderſtanding of man.

2. In like manner I aduiſe thee not to inquire, nor diſpute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdome of heauen. Theſe things oftentimes breed ſtrife and vnprofitable contentions: they nouriſh alſo pride and vaine glory, from whence do vſually ſpring enuy & diſſentions, whilſt one will needs fooliſhly haue this Saint preferred, & the other, another. To deſire to know and ſearch out ſuch things, is to no purpoſe, but to diſpleaſe the Saints, of whome they ſpeake. For I am not the God of diſſenſion, but of peace, which peace conſiſteth rather in true humility, then in exalting our ſelues.

3. Some are carried with zeale of affection, to loue theſe, or thoſe moſt, but this loue is rather humane then diuine. I haue made all the Saints, and haue giuen them grace: I haue made them partakers of myglo-

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ry. I know the merits of euery one, I haue preuented them in the benedictions of my ſweetnes. I foreknew my beloued before the beginning of the world. I choſe them out of the world, they choſe not me firſt. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through ſundry temptations. I haue ſent them great inward comforts, I haue giuen them perſeuerance, I haue crowned their patience.

4. I know the firſt and laſt: I imbrace all with ineſtinable loue. I am to be praiſed in all my Saints: I am to be bleſſed aboue all things, and to be honoured in euery one, whom I haue thus glorioufly exalted, and predeſtinated without any precedent merits of their owne. He therfore that contemneth one of the leaſt of my Saints, honoureth not the greateſt, for that I made both the leſſe & the greater. And he that diſpraiſeth any of my Saints, diſpraiſeth alſo me, and all the reſt in the Kingdome of heauen. All are one by the band of

Charity, they thinke the ſame, they will the ſame, and are all knit togeather in one perfect band of loue.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they loue me more then themſelues, and more then their owne merits. For being rauiſhed aboue themſelues, and drawne out of the affection of themſelues, they tend wholy vnto the loue of me, in which alſo they reſt, enioying me with vnſpeakable glory. Nothing can put them backe, nothing preſſe them downe; for being full of euerlaſting truth, they burne with the fire of vnquenchable charity. Let therefore carnall and earthly men, that can affect no other but priuate ioyes, forbeare to diſpute of the ſtate of Saints. They adde & take away according to their owne fancies, not as it pleaſeth the euerlaſting Truth.

6. There is in many great ignorance, ſpecially in thoſe that be ſlenderly enlightned, and theſe can ſeldome loue any with perfect ſpirituall loue. They are alwaies much drawn by

by a naturall affection, and humane friendſhip to this man or to that, & according to the experiēce they haue of themſelues in their earthly affections, ſo they frame an imagination of heauenly things. But there is an incomparable diſtance betweene the things, which the imperfect frame in their conceipts, and thoſe which illuminated perſons do ſee by reuelation from aboue.

7. Beware therfore, my Some, that thou treat not curiouſly of theſe things, which exceed thy knowledg, but rather ſo apply thy endeauours, that thou maiſt at leaſt haue the meaneſt place in the Kingdome of heauē. And if any one did know which of the Saints exceeded others in ſanctity, or is eſteemed great in the Kingdome of heauen, what would this knowledg auaile him, vnleſſe he ſhould thereby humble himſelfe the more in my ſight, and ſtirre vp his mind to praiſe my name with greater feruour. His labour is much more acceptable vnto God, that thinketh

of the greatnes of his sinnes, and his want of vertues, and how far off he is from the perfection of the Saints; then he that disputeth of their greatnes. It is better to pray to the Saints with deuotion and teares, & to craue their glorious suffrages with an hũble mind, then to search their secrets with vaine curiosity.

8. They are well and right wel contented, if men could content thẽselues and refraine from these vaine discourses. They glory not of their owne merits, for they ascribe no good vnto themselues, but attribute all to me, who of my infinite charity haue bestowed my blessings vpon them. They are replenished with so great loue of my Godhead, and so superabundant ioy, that there is no glory nor happines, that is, or can be wanting vnto them. All the Saints how much the higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselues, and neerer and neerer vnto me. And therfore thou hast it written, That they did cast their Crownes

Crownes before God, and fell down vpon their face before the Lambe, and adored him that liueth for euer.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdome of God, that know not whether they shall euer be numbred there amongst the least. It is no small matter to be euen the least in heauen, wher all are great: for that all there shall be called, and shalbe indeed the Sonnes of God. The least there shall be great among thousands, and the sinner of a hundred yeares shall die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdome of heauen, they receaued this answere. Vnlesse you be conuerted, & become as litle children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heauen. Whosoeuer therfore shal humble himselfe as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdome of heauen.

10. Woe be vnto them that disdaine to humble themselues willingly with little children. For the low-

gate of the Kingdome of heauen, wil not giue them entrance. And woe be to the rich, that haue their comforts heere, for whilst the poore enter into the Kingdome of God, they shall be wanting without. Reioyce you that be humble: and you that be poore, be you glad, for yours is the Kingdome of God, if you walke according vnto truth.

CHAP. LIX.

That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

LORD, what trust haue I in this world? Or what is the greatest comfort, that all thinges vnder heauen do yield me? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number? Where hath it bene wel with me without thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert present? I had rather be poore for thee, then rich without thee. I rather choose

chooſe to be a Pilgrime in earth with thee, then to poſſeſſe heauen without thee. Where thou art, there is heauen: and there is death and hell, where thou art not. Thou art my deſire, and therfore it behoueth me to ſend forth deep ſighes from my hart, and crie and pray vnto thee. For I haue none to truſt vnto, none that can help me in tyme of neceſſity, but thee alone, my God. Thou art my hope, & my truſt; thou art my comforter, and moſt faithfull vnto me in all my diſtreſſes.

2. All men ſeeke their owne gaine, thou only ſeekeſt my ſaluation and my profit, and turneſt all things to my good. Although thou permitteſt many temptations to aſſault me, & many aduerſities to befall me, yet thou ordaineſt all this to my good & profit, who art wont to proue thy beloued ſeruants a thouſand waies. In which proofe thou oughteſt no leſſe to be loued and prayſed, then if thou dideſt repleniſh me with heauenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge: in thee I place my tribulation and anguish, for I finde all to be weake and vnconstant, whatsoeuer I behould out of thee. For neither can many friends auaile, nor forcible helpers aid, nor wise counselours giue profitable answere, nor the bookes of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliuer, nor any secret, or pleasant place defend, if thou thou thy selfe doest not assist, help, comfort, instruct, & keep vs.

4. For all things that seeme to be ordayned for the rest & solace of man, when thou art absent, are nothing, & do bring indeed no ioy, nor comfort at all. Thou therefore art the end of al that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdom: & the most forcible comfort of thy seruants, is to trust in thee aboue all things. To thee therefore do I lift vp myne eyes: In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Blesse & sanctify my soule with thy heauenly

blessings,

blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, & the seat of thy eternall glory: and that nothing may be found in the temple of thy greatnes, that may offend the eyes of thy Maiesty. According to the greatnesse of thy goodnesse, and multitude of thy mercies, take pitty vpon me, and heare the prayer of thy poore seruāt, who is farre exiled from thee in the land of the shaddow of death. Protect, & keep the soule of thy seruant, amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, & by the assistance of thy grace, direct it in the way of peace, to the country of euerlasting light, Amen.

The end of the third Booke.

OF

OF THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

THE FOVRTH BOOKE.

A deuout Exhortation vnto the bleſſed Sacrament.

The voyce of Chriſt.

COME vnto me all yee that labour & are burdened, & I will refreſh you, ſaith our Lord. The bread which I will giue, is my fleſh, for the life of the world.

world. Take yee and eate, this is my body that ſhall be deliuered for you. Doe this for the commemoration of me. He that eateth my fleſh, & drinketh my bloud, remaineth in me, & I in him. The words which I haue ſpoken vnto you, are ſpirit & life.

CHAP. I.

With how great reuerence Chriſt ought to be receaued.

THESE are thy words O Chriſt, euerlaſting Truth, though not ſpoken all at one time, nor written in one and the ſelfe ſame place. Becauſe therefore they are thine and true, they are all thankfully & faithfully to be receaued by me. They are thine, and thou haſt ſpoken them, and they are mine alſo, becauſe thou haſt ſpoken them for my ſaluation. I willingly receaue them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my hart. Theſe deuout words

ſo

so ful of swetnesse and loue, doe stir me vp, but mine owne offences doe amaze me, and my impure conscience driueth me backe from the receauing of so great mysteries. The sweetnesse of thy words doth ēcourage me, but the multitude of my sinnes do oppresse me.

2. Thou commaundest me to come confidently vnto thee, if I will haue part with thee: and to receaue the food of immortality, if I desire to obtaine euerlasting life and glory. Come, sayst thou, vnto me, all yee that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. O sweet and louely word in the eare of a sinner, that thou my Lord God shouldest inuite the poore and needy to receaue thy most blessed body. But who am I Lord, that I may presume to approach vnto thee? behould the heauens cannot containe thee, and thou sayst: Come ye all vnto me.

3. What meaneth this most pious benignity, nnd so louing inuitation? How shall I dare to come, that know

know not any good in me, where-upon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my house, that haue often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and iust men do feare thee; and thou saist, Come ye all vnto me. Vnlesse thou O Lord didst say it, who would belieue it to be true? And vnlesse thou didst commaund it, who would dare to come vnto thee. Behould Noah a iust man laboured a hundred yeares in the building of the Arke, that he might be saued with a few: and how can I in one houres space prepare my selfe to receaue with reuerence the maker of the world?

4. Moyses thy great seruant, & especiall friend, made an Arke of incorruptible wood, which also he couered with most pure gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten creature, how shall I so lightly dare to receaue the maker of the Law, and the giuer of life? Salomon the wisest of the Kings of Israel, bestowed

ſtowed ſeauen yeares in building a magnificent Temple, in praiſe of thy name, & celebrated the feaſt of the Dedication therof eight daies togeather: he offered a thouſand peaceable ſacrifices, & ſet the Arke in the place prepared for it, with the ſound of trumpets, and of ioy: and I the moſt vnhappy and pooreſt of men, how ſhall I bring thee into my houſe, that can ſcarce ſpend one halfe houre deuoutly? and I would to God it were once almoſt one halfe houre, in worthy and due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they endeauour to pleaſe thee, and alas how little is that which I doe? How ſhort time do I ſpend, when I prepare my ſelfe to receaue: I am ſeldome wholy recollected, very ſeldome altogeather free from diſtraction; and yet ſurely no vndecent thought ſhould occurre in the preſence of thy Deity, nor any creature draw me vnto it: for I am not to harbour an Angell, but the Lord of Angels,

6. And

6. And yet there is great difference betweene the Arke & the Reliques therof, and thy most pure body with his vnspeakable vertues: betweene those legall sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy body, the complement of all ancient Sacrifices. Why therfore do I not become more feruent in thy venerable presence? Wherefore do I not prepare my self with greater care to receaue thy sacred gifts, sith those holy ancient Patriarches, and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with the whole people haue shewed so great zeale of deuotion to thy diuine seruice?

7. The most deuout King Dauid daunced before the Arke of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past vpon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalmes, and appointed them to be sung with ioy: himselfe also oftentimes played vpon the harpe. Being inspired with the grace of the holy Ghost,

Ghoſt, he taught the people of Iſrael to praiſe God with their whole hart, and with pleaſant voyces euery day to bleſſe and praiſe him. If ſo great deuotion was then vſed, and ſuch memory of diuin praiſe before the Arke of the Teſtament, what reuerence & deuotion is now to be performed by me, and all Chriſtian people in the preſence of this Sacrament, in receauing the moſt precious body of Chriſt?

8. Many go to ſundry places to viſit the Reliques of Saints, & are aſtonished when they heare of their miraculous works: they behould the ſpacious buildings of their Churches, & kiſſe their ſacred bones wrapped in ſilke and gould. And behold thou art heere preſent with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the maker of all things, & Lord of Angels. Oftentimes in thoſe deuotions there is but curioſity of men and nouelty of the beholders in the ſeeing of ſuch ſights, and little fruite of amendment is gotten thereby, eſpecially where

where there is so vnconstant wandring without true contrition. But heere in the Sacrament of the altar, thou art present, my Lord, God and Man, Christ Iesus, where also plentifull fruit of euerlasting saluation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily, and deuoutly receaued. No leuity, no curiosity, or sensuality draweth vnto this, but firme faith, deuout hope, and sincere charity.

9. O God the inuisible Creatour of the world, how wonderfully doest thou deale with vs! how sweetly and graciously doest thou dispose of all things with thy elect, to whome thou offerest thy selfe to be receaued in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth all vnderstanding of man: this chiefly draweth the harts of the deuout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithfull seruants that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receaue great grace of deuotiō, & loue of vertue.

10. O admirable & hidden grace of

of this Sacrament, which only the faithfull of Christ do know: but the vnfaithfull, & such as are slaues vnto sinn, cannot cõceaue nor feele. In this Sacrament spirituall grace is giuen, & lost vertue is restored in the soule: and beauty disfigured by sinne returneth againe. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulnesse of deuotion, which is here giuen, not only the mind, but the weake body also feeleth great increase of strength.

11. Our coldnesse & negligence surely is much to be bewailed & pitied, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receaue Christ, in whom all the hope and merit of those that are to be saued doth consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption; he is the comfort of passengers, and the euerlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therfore to be lamented that many do so little consider this comfortable mystery, which reioyceth heauen, & perseuereth the whole world. O blindnes and hardnes of mans hart, that doth not more deeply

ply weigh the greatnes of ſo vnſpeakable a gift, but rather comes by the daily vſe therof, to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this moſt holy Sacrament ſhould be celebrated in one place only, and conſecrated by one only Prieſt in the world: with how great deſire doeſt thou thinke would men be affected to that place: and what eſteeme would they haue of ſuch a Prieſt of Almighty God, by whome they might enioy the conſolation of theſe diuine myſteries? but now there are many Prieſts, & Chriſt is offered vp in many places, that ſo the grace & loue of God to man may appeare ſo much the greater, how much the more this ſacred Communion is common through the world. I thāks be vnto thee, good Ieſu, euerlaſting Paſtour of our ſouls, that haſt vouchſafed to refreſh vs poore & baniſhed men, with thy precious Body & Bloud, & to inuite vs to the receauing of theſe myſteries with the words of thy owne mouth, ſaying: Come

Come vnto me all ye that labour and are burdened, & I will refresh you.

CHAP. II.

That great goodnesse and charity of God is bestowed vpon man in this Sacrament.

The voice of the Disciple.

PRESVMING of thy goodeesse & great mercy, o Lord, being sicke, I approach vnto my Sauiour, hungry and thirsty to the fountaine of life, needy to the King of heauē, a seruant vnto my Lord, a creature to my Creator, desolate to my mercifull comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchsafest to come vnto me? Who am I that thou shouldest giue thy selfe vnto me? How dare a sinner presume to appeare before thee? And thou, how doest thou vouchsafe to come vnto a sinner? Thou knowest thy seruant, and seest that he hath no good

good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this benefit vpon him. I confesse therfore my vnworthinesse, and I acknowledge thy goodnesse: I praise thy mercy, and giue thee thanks for this thy vnspeakable charity. For thou doest this for thine owne goodnesse, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodnesse may be better known vnto me, thy charity more aboundantly shewed, and thy humility more highly comended. Since therfore it is thy pleasure, and hast commanded that it should be so, this thy bounty is also pleasing to me, and do wish that my offices may be no hinderance.

2. O most sweet and bountifull Iesu, how great reuerence & thanks, with perpetual praise is due vnto thee for the receauing of thy sacred body, whose worth and dignity no man is abre to expresse! But what shall I thinke of at this time, now that I am to receaue this diuine Sacrament, and to approach vnto my Lord, to whom I am not able to giue due reuerence,

and yet I desire to receaue him deuoutly? What can I think better, & more profitable, then to humble my my selfe wholy before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodnesse aboue me? I praise thee my God, & will exalt thee for euer: and I do despise, and submit my selfe vnto thee, euen into the depth of my vnworthinesse.

3. Behould thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! behold thou bowest thy selfe downe vnto me, who am not worthy so much as to looke vp vnto thee! Behould thou commest vnto me: it is thy will to be with me, thou inuitest me to thy banquet. Thou wilt giue me the food of heauen, and bread of Angels to eate, which is no other truely then thy selfe, the liuely bread, that descendest from heauen, & giuest life vnto the world.

4. Behould from whence this loue proceedeth! what kind of fauour and benignity is this which shineth vpon vs! What thankes and praises

are

are due vnto thee for these benefits! O how good and profitable was thy counsell, when thou ordainedst it! How sweet & pleasant the banquet when thou gauest thy selfe to be our food! How wonderfull thy worke, o Lord, how powerfull thy vertue, how vnspeakable thy truth! For thou saidst the word, and all things were made; & this was done which thou commandest.

5. A thing of great admiration, and worthy of faith, and surpassing the vnderstanding of man, that thou, my Lord God, true God and Man, shouldest be wholy conteyned vnder a small forme of bread & wine, and shouldest be eaten by the receauer without being consumed: Thou who art the Lord of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in vs by meanes of this thy Sacrament: preserue my heart and body vnspotted, that with a cheerfull and pure conscience I may often celebrate thy mysteries, and receaue thē to my euerlasting health, which

thou haſt chiefly ordained & inſtituted for thy honour, and perpetuall memory.

6. Reioyce my ſoule, and giue thanks vnto God for ſo noble a gift, and ſingular comfort left vnto thee in this vale of teares. For as often as thou calleſt to mind this myſtery, & receaueſt the body of Chriſt: ſo often doſt thou worke the worke of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Chriſt. For the charity of Chriſt is neuer diminiſhed, & the greatneſſe of his mercy is neuer leſſened. Therefore thou oughteſt alwaies to diſpoſe thy ſelfe hereunto by a freſh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentiue conſideration this great myſtery of thy ſaluation. So great, new, and ioyfull it ought to ſeeme vnto thee, when thou ſayeſt, or heareſt Maſſe, as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt deſcending into the wombe of the Virgin, were become man: or hanging on croſſe, did ſuffer & dye for the ſaluation of mankind.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEHOLD, O Lord, I come vnto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord hast prepared in thy ſweetneſſe, for the poore Behold in thee is all whatſoeuer I can, or ought to deſire: thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope, and my ſtrength, my honour, and my glory. Make ioyfull therefore this day, the ſoule of thy ſeruant, for that I haue lifted it vp to thee my ſweet Ieſus. I deſire to receaue thee now with deuotion, and reuerence. I do long to bring thee into my houſe, that with Zachæus I may deſerue to be bleſſed by thee, & numbred amongſt the children of Abrahã. My ſoule thirſteth to receaue thy body, my hart deſireth to be v-

nited with thee.

2. Giue thy selfe to me, and it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is auailable. I cannot be without thee, nor liue without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come vnto thee, and receaue thee as the only remedy of my health, least perhaps I faint in the way, if I be depriued of thy heauenly food. For so, most mercifull Iesus, thou once didst say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases: I will not send them home fasting, least they faint in the way. Deale thou therfore in like manner now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leaue thy selfe in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithfull. For thou art the sweet refection of the soule, and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be partaker, and heire of euerlasting glory. It is necessary for me, that do so often fall and sinne, so quickly wax dull and faint, that by often praiers & confession, and receauing of thy sacred body, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my selfe, least per-

perhaps by long abstayning I fall frō my holy purpose.

3. For man is prone vnto euill from his youth, and vnlesse this diuine remedy help him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Communion therfore draweth back from euill, and comforteth in good. For if I be now so often slack and negligent when I communicate, or say Masse, what would become of me, if I receaued not this remedy, & sought not after so great a help? Though euery day I be not fit, nor well prepared to say Masse, I will endeauour notwithstanding at conuenient times to receaue the diuine mysteries, and make my selfe partaker of so great a grace. For this is the only chiefe comfort of a faithfull soule, whilst she wandereth from thee in this mortall body, that being mindful of her God, she ofte receaue her Beloued with a deuout mind.

4. O wonderfull benignity of thy mercy towards vs, that thou, Lord God, the Creatour and giuer of

life to all ſpirits, doeſt vouchſafe to come vnto a poore ſoule, & with thy whole Godhead & Humanity to repleniſh her hunger. O happy mind & bleſſed ſoule, that deſerueth to receaue thee, her Lord God, with deuout affection, & in receauing of thee to be filled with ſpirituall ioy! O how great a Lord doth ſhe intertain! How beloued a gheſt doth ſhe harbour! how pleaſant a companion doth ſhe receaue! how faithfull a friend doth ſhe accept! how beautifull and noble a ſpouſe doth ſhe imbrace! ſhe imbraceth him who is to be loued aboue al that is beloued, and aboue all things that may be deſired. Let heauen and earth and all their beauty be ſilent in thy preſence. For what beauty and praiſe ſoeuer they haue, it is receaued from thy bounty & ſhal not equal the beauty of thy name, of whoſe wiſdome there is no end.

CHAP.

CHAP. IIII.

That many benefits are bestowed vpon them that communicate deuoutly.

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, preuent thy seruãt in the blessings of thy sweetnesse, that I may deserue to approach worthily and deuoutly to thy holy Sacrament: stirre vp my hart vnto thee, and deliuer me from all heauinesse and slouth: visit me with thy cõfort, that I may taste in spirit thy sweetnesse, which plentifully lyeth hid in this Sacrament, as a fountaine. Giue light also to my eyes to behold so great a mystery, & strengthẽ me to beleeue it with vndoubted faith. For it is thy worke, and not mans power, thy sacred institution, not mans inuention. For no man is of himselfe able to cõprehend & vnderstand these things, which surpasse the vnderstanding e-

tien of Angels. What therfore shall I vnworthy sinner, earth and ashes, be able to search and comprehend of so high and sacred a mystery?

2. O Lord in sincerity of hart, with a good and firme faith, and at thy commaundement, I come vnto thee with hope and reuerence, and do verily belieue, that thou art heere present in the Sacrament, God and Man. Thy holy pleasure is, that I receaue thee, & by charity do vnite my selfe vnto thee. Wherfore I do recurre vnto thy Clemency, & do craue speciall grace, that I may wholy melt in thee, and abound with loue, and heerafter neuer admit any externall comfort. For this most high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the soule and body, the remedy of all spirituall sicknes: by it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations ouercome or weakened, greater grace infused, vertue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still

ſtill oftentimes doeſt beſtow many benefits in this Sacrament vpon thy beloued that receaue it deuotly, my God the Protectour of my ſoule, the ſtrengthener of humane frailty, and the giuer of al inward comfort. Thou impartest vnto them much comfort againſt ſundry tribulations, and liftest them vp from the depth of their owne baſenes, to the hope of thy protection, and doeſt inwardly refreſh and illuſtrate them with a certaine new grace, in ſuch ſort, that they who before Communion felt themſelues heauy and indiſpoſed, afterwards being ſtrengthened with heauenly meate and drinke, do find in themſelues a great change to the better: Which thou doeſt ſo diſpoſe to thy elect, that they may truly acknowledg, and patiently proue, how great their owne infirmity is, & what benefit and grace they receaue from thee. For they of themſelues are cold, dull, and vndeuout; but by thee they are made feruent, agile, and full of deuotion. For who is there, that

approaching humbly vnto the Fountaine of ſweetneſſe, doth not carry away from thence at leaſt ſome little ſweetneſſe? Or who ſtanding by a great fire, receaueth not ſome ſmall heate therby? Thou art a fountaine alwaies full & ouerflowing, a fire euer burning & neuer decaying.

4. Wherfore if I cannot draw at the full out of this fountaine, nor drinke my fill, I will notwithſtanding ſet my lips to the mouth of this heauenly conduite, that I may draw from thence at leaſt ſome ſmall drop to refreſh my thirſt, to the end I wither not wholy away and periſh. And though I be not altogeather celeſtiall, nor ſo inflamed as the Cherubims & Seraphims, notwithſtanding I will endeauour to apply my ſelfe to deuotion, and diſpoſe my hart to obtaine ſome ſmall ſparke of diuine fire by humble receauing of this life-giuing Sacrament. And whatſoeuer is hereunto wanting in me, good Ieſu, moſt bleſſed Sauiour, do thou ſupply for me, moſt benigne and gratious Lord, who

who haſt vouchſafed to call vs vnto thee, ſaying: Come vnto me all yee that labour & are burdened, & I wil refreſh you.

5. I labour in the ſweate of my browes, I am vexed with griefe of hart, I am burdened with ſins, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled & oppreſſed with many euill paſſions, & there is none to help me, none to deliuer & ſaue me, but thou, Lord God, my Sauiour, to whome I commit my ſelfe, & all mine, that thou maiſt keep me, & bring me to life euerlaſting. Receaue me to the honour and glory of thy name, who haſt prepared thy Body & Bloud to be my meat & my drinke. Graunt, Lord God, my Sauiour, that by frequenting thy myſteries, my zeale & deuotion may increaſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the dignity of this Sacrament, and Prieſtly function.

The voice of the Diſciple.

IF thou hadſt angelicall purity, and the ſanctity of S. Iohn Baptiſt, thou wert not worthy to receaue, nor hãdle this Sacrament. For it is not within the compaſſe of the deſerts of men that man ſhould conſecrate & handle the Sacrament of Chriſt, and receaue for food the bread of Angels. A great myſtery, and great is the dignity of Prieſts, to whome is graunted that, which is not permitted to the Angels. For Prieſts only inſtituted in the Church, haue power to celebrate, & conſecrate the body of Chriſt. The Prieſt is the Miniſter of God, vſing the wordes of God, by Gods commaundement, and appointment; but God is there the principall actour, & inuiſible

inuisible worker, to whome is subiect all that he pleaseth, and all that he commaundeth, doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to giue more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thine owne sense, or to any visible signe. And therfore thou art to come vnto this Mystery with feare and reuerence. Consider attentiuely with thy selfe, what that is, wherof the Ministry is deliuered vnto thee by the imposition of hands of the Bishop. Behould thou art made a Priest, & consecrated to say Masse: see now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice vnto God faithfully & deuoutly, and carry thy selfe so, as thou maist be without reproofe. Thou hast not lightned thy burthem, but art now bound with a straiter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctity. A Priest ought to be adorned with al kind of vertue, & to giue example of good life to others. His conuersation should not be according to the ordinary and com-

mon

mon proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heauen, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Prieſt clothed in ſacred garments is the Vicegerent of Chriſt, to pray humbly, and with a proſtrate mind vnto God for himſelfe & the whole people. He hath before, & behind the ſigne of the Croſſe of our Lord, to the end he may euer remẽber the Paſſion of Chriſt: he beareth the Croſſe before him in the Veſtement, that he may diligently behould the foot-ſteps of Chriſt, and feruently endeauour to follow them. He is behind marked with the croſſe, that he may patiently ſuffer for God whatſoeuer aduerſities ſhall be layd vpon him by others. He beareth the croſſe before, that he may lament his owne ſinnes: and the ſame he hath alſo behind, that he may with a compaſſionate hart bewaile the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediatour betweene God and the ſinner. Neither ought he to ceaſe frõ praier and holy oblation, till he deſerue

ſerue to obtaine grace and mercy. When a Prieſt doth celebrate, he honoureth God, reioyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, helpeth the liuing, giueth reſt to the dead, & maketh himſelfe partaker of all good deeds.

CHAP. VI.

An Interrogation of the exerciſe before Communion.

The voice of the Diſciple.

WHEN I weigh thy greatneſſe, O Lord, and my vnworthineſſe, I tremble, and am comfounded in my ſelfe. For if I come not vnto thee, I fly from life; & if I vnworthily intrude my ſelfe. I incurre thy diſpleaſure. What therfore ſhall I do my God, my helper, and my counſellour in neceſſity?

2. Teach me the right way, appoint

point me some brief exercise sutable to this holy mystery of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I should reuerently and deuoutly prepare my hart vnto thee, for the profitable receauing of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great & diuine a Sacrifice.

CHAP. VII.

Of the discussing of our owne conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voyce of the Beloued.

ABOVE all things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receaue this Sacrament with great humility of hart, and lowly reuerence, with a full faith, and a Godly desire of the honeur of the diuine Maiesty. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power, purge

purge and clenſe it with true contrition, and humble confeſſion: ſo as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdenſome vnto thee, or that may breed in thee remorſe of cõſcience, & hinder thy free acceſſe to theſe heauenly myſteries. Repent thee of all thy ſinnes in generall, and in particuler bewaile thy daily offéces. And if thou haſt time, confeſſe vnto God in the ſecret of thy hart, all the myſeries of thy diſordered paſſions.

2. Lament and grieue, that thou art yet ſo ſubiect to ſenſuality, and ſo addicted to the world, ſo vnmortified in thy paſſions, ſo ful of the motions of concupiſcence, ſo vnwatchfull ouer thy outward ſenſes, ſo often intangled with many vaine fantaſies, ſo vehemently inclined to outward things, ſo negligent in the interiour, ſo prone to laughter and immodeſty, ſo hard to teares & compunction, ſo prompt to eaſe & pleaſures of the fleſh, ſo dull to auſterity & feruour, ſo curious to heare newes and ſee vaine ſights, ſo ſlack to imbrace

brace that which tends to thine own humiliation and contempt, so couetous of aboundance, so niggardly in giuing, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speach, so vnbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outragious in deedes, so greedy to meate, so deafe to the word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchfull to tales, so drowsy to wratch in the seruice of God, so hasty to the end therof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in saying thy office, so vndeuout in saying Masse, so dry in receauing, so quickly distracted, so seldome wholy recollected, so suddainly moued to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to iudge, so seuere to reprehend, so ioyfull in prosperity, so weake in aduersity, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These & other thy defects confessed, & bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine owne infirmity, mak a firme purpose alwaies to amēd thy selfe, & to go forwards in vertue.

Then

Then with full reſignation, & with thy whole wil offer thy ſelfe vp to the the honour of my name, a perpetuall ſacrifice in the altar of thy hart, faithfully committing thy body & ſoule vnto me, that thou maiſt ſo alſo deſerue to come worthily to offer ſacrifice vnto God, and to receaue profitably thy Sacrament of my body.

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor ſatisfaction greater, for the waſhing away of ſinnnes, then to offer vp our ſelues vnto God purely and wholy with the oblation of the Body of Chriſt in the Maſſe, and in Communion. And when a man ſhall naue done what lieth in him, & ſhall be truly penitent, as I liue, ſaith our Lord, who will not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he be conuerted & liue, I will not remember his ſinns any more, but they ſhall be all forgiuen him, & fully pardoned.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the oblation of Christ on the Crosse, & resignation of our selues.

The voice of the Beloued.

AS I willingly offered vp my selfe vnto God my Father, with my hands streched forth on the Crosse, and my body naked for thy sinnes, so that nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice, for the appeasing of the diuine wrath: so oughtest thou also to offer vp thy selfe willingly vnto me daily in the Masse, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy whole force, and desire, in as harty a māner as thou canst. What do I require of thee more, then that thou resigne thy selfe wholy vnto me? Whatsoeuer thou giuest besides thy selfe, is of little accompt in my sight, for I seeke not thy gift, but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to

to haue all things whatsoeuer besides me; so neither can it please me whatsoeuer thou giuest, if thou offerest not vp thy selfe Offer thy selfe vnto me, and giue thy selfe, all that thou art, for God, and thy offering shall be gratefull. Behould I offered vp my selfe wholy vnto my Father for thee, and gaue my whole body, & bloud for thy food, that I might be wholy thine, and thou remaine mine. But if thou abidest in thy selfe, and doest not offer thy selfe vp freely vnto my will; thy oblation is not entiere, neither shall the vnion betweene vs be perfect Therefore a free offering vp of thy selfe into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtaine freedome and grace. For this cause so few become inwardly illuminated, and enioy true liberty of hart, for that they do not resolue wholy to deny themselues. My saying is vndoubtedly true. Vnlesse one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therfore wish to be mine, offer vp thy

thy ſelfe vnto me with thy whole deſires.

CHAP. IX.

That we ought to offer vp our ſelues & all that is ours vnto God, and to pray for all.

The voice of the Diſciple.

THINE, O Lord, are all things that are in heauen and in earth. I deſire to offer vp my ſelfe vnto thee, as a free oblation, and to remaine alwaies thine. O Lord, in ſincerity of my hart, I offer my ſelfe vnto thee this day, in ſacrifice of perpetuall praiſe, to be thy ſeruant for euer. Receaue me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which in the preſence of the Angells inuiſibly attending heere vpon thee, I offer vp this day vnto thee, that it may be to the health of my ſoule, and the ſaluation

of all thy people.

2. I offer vnto thee, O Lord, all my sinnes and offences, which I haue committed in the sight of thee, and thy holy Angels, from the day wherin I first could sinne, to this houre, vpon thy holy altar: that thou maist consume and burne them al with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the staines of my sinnes, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore to me againe thy grace, which I lost by sinne, forgiuing me all my offences, and receauing me mercifully in the kisse of peace.

3. What can I do for my sinns, but humbly confesse & bewaile thé, and intreat alwaies for mercy without intermission? I beseech thee, heare me in thy aboundant mercy, when I stand before thee my God. All my sinnes are very displeasing vnto me. I will neuer commit them any more, but I am sory, and will be sory for them as long as I liue, and am ready to do pennance, and to satisfy for them to the vttermost of my po-

wer. Forgiue me O God, forgiue me my sinnes, for thy holy names sake: saue my soule, which thou hast redeemed with thy precious Bloud. Behould I commit my selfe vnto thy mercy, I resigne my selfe ouer into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodnesse, not according to my wickednes, and manifold iniquity.

4. I offer vp also vnto thee all whatsoeuer is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctify it, that thou maist make it grateful & acceptable vnto thee, and alwaies perfect more and more that which thou hast begun, and bring me also, who am the slouthfull and vnprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer vp also vnto thee all the Godly desires of deuout persons, the necessities of my parents and friends, my brethren & sisters, & of all those that are deere vnto me, and that haue done good either to my selfe or others for thy loue, and that haue desired me to say Masse & pray for them

and

and all others, whether they be yet aliue; or already dead: that they all may receaue the help of thy grace & comfort, protection from dangers, deliuery from paine, and being freed from all euills, may ioyfully giue worthy thankes to thee.

6. I offer vp also vnto thee my prayers, and sacrifices, especially for them who haue in any thing wronged, grieued, or slaundered me, or haue done me any domage or displeasure, & for those also, whome I haue at any time grieued, troubled, and scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly, or at vnawares: that it may please thee to forgiue vs all our sinnes & offences, one against the other. Take, O Lord, from our harts all iealousy, all indignation, wrath, and contention, & whatsoeuer may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly loue. Haue mercy, O Lord, haue mercy on those, that craue thy mercy: giue grace vnto them, that stand in need thereof, and graunt that we may be worthy to enioy thy grace, and

attaine to life euerlasting, Amen.

CHAP. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborne.

The voice of the Beloued.

THOV oughtest often to haue recourse to the Fountaine of grace, and of diuine mercy, to the Fountaine of goodnesse, and of all piety, that thou maist be cured of thy sinnes and passions, & deserue to be made more strong and vigilant against all temptations and deceipts of the Diuell. The enemy knowing the greatest profit, and remedy to consist in the holy Communion, endeauoureth by all meanes & occasions to withdraw and hinder faithfull and deuout persons from it.

2. Some when they purpose to receiue the sacred Communion, suffer greatest assaults of the Diuell. For that

that wicked ſpirit (as is written in Iob) commeth amongſt the Sonns of God, to trouble them with his accuſtomed malice & impiety, or to make them ouer fearfull & perplexed, that ſo he may diminiſh their affection, or by ſubtile aſſaultes, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogeather abſtaine from this diuine food, or at leaſt come vnto it with leſſe deuotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and malicious ſuggeſtions, be they neuer ſo filthy and hideous, but all is to be turned back vpon his owne head. We ought to contemne and ſcorne him miſerable wreth, and not to omit the ſacred communion for his aſſaults, & the troubles which he raiſeth.

3 Oftentimes alſo an exceſſiue care for the obtaining of deuotion, & a certaine anxiety for the making of our Confeſſion hindreth vs. Follow in theſe occaſions the counſell of the wiſe, and put away all anxiety & ſcruple, for it hindreth the grace of God, and ouerthroweth deuotion.

Omit not for euery ſmall vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receaue this holy Sacrament, but go preſently to confeſſion, and willingly forgiue others, whatſoeuer offences they haue done againſt thee: and if thou haſt offended any, humbly craue pardon, and God will willingly forgiue thee.

4. What auaileth it to delay confeſſion, and to defer receauing? Purge thy ſelfe with ſpeed, ſpit out the venom preſently, make haſt to take a remedy, and thou ſhalt find it better, then if thou deferredſt it long. If thou omitteſt it to day for this cauſe, perhaps to morrow ſome greater will fall out, and ſo thou maiſt be hindred a long time from theſe diuine myſteries, and become more vnfit. Stirre vp thy ſelfe, and ſhake off all heauineſſe and ſlouth, with the greateſt force and ſpeed thou canſt. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in diſquietnes and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments to withdraw thy ſelfe from

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the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to defer Communion long, for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulneſſe. Alas, ſome cold and diſſolute people, do willingly delay their confeſſion, & do therfore defer the ſacred Communion, leaſt they ſhould be bound to greater watch ouer themſelues.

6. O how little charity & weake deuotion haue they that ſo eaſily omit the receauing of theſe holy myſteries! How happy is he and gratefull to God, who ordereth ſo his life, and keepeth his conſcience in ſuch purity, that he may be ready and fit to communicate euery day, if it were conuenient & might be done without note. If any one ſometimes abſtaine of humility, or by reaſon of ſome lawfull impedient, he is to be commended for the reuerence which therin he ſheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldneſſe, he muſt ſtir himſelfe vp, & do what lieth in him, and God will proſper his deſire, for the good will he hath to do it, which God

doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawfull hindrance doth happen, he must alwaies haue yet a good will, and louing desire to communicate, and so shall he not loose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a deuout person may euery day and houre profitably & without let, receaue Christ spiritually: and yet on certaine daies, and at time appointed he ought to receaue Sacramentally with a reuerend desire the Body of his Redeemer, and rather seeke the honour and glory of God, then his owne comfort. For he cõmunicateth mystically and is inuisibly fed, as often as he deuoutly calleth to mind the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Passion of Christ, & is inflamed with his loue.

7. He that prepareth not himselfe, but when a feast draweth neere, and when custome compelleth him therunto, shall often be vnprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himselfe vp as an Holocaust and burnt offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate

brate or communicate. Be not too long nor too short in saying Masse, but keep the accustomed manner of those, with whom thou liuest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious & troublesome to others, but to obserue the commō course according to the appointment of thy Superiours: and rather frame thy selfe to the profit of others, then to thine owne deuotion or desire.

CHAP. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture are most necessary vnto a faithfull soule.

The voice of the Disciple.

O MOST sweet Lord Iesu, how great is the delight of a deuout soule that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meate offered to be eaten, but thy selfe her only beloued, and most to be desired aboue all the desires of her

hart. And verily it would be a great comfort vnto me, to powre out teares from the bottome of my hart in thy presence, and with deuout Magdalen to wash thy feet with the teares of mine eyes. But where is this deuotion? Where is so plentifull shedding of holy teares? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole hart should be inflamed and dissolue into teares for ioy. For I enioy thee in the Sacrament really present, although hidden vnder another forme.

2. For to behould thee in thine owne diuine brightnesse, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world stand in the clearnesse of the glory of thy Maiesty. Thou therfore prouidest for my weaknesse in that thou couerest thy selfe vnder the Sacrament. I do really enioy and adore him, whome the Angels adore in heauen, but I, as yet for the time, in faith, they in his proper forme, and without shaddow. I ought to be contēted with the light of true faith, and to walke therin,

vntill

vntil the day of euerlasting brightnesse breake forth, & the shaddowes of figures passe away. But when that shall come which is perfect, the vse of Sacraments shall cease. For the blessed in heauenly glory need not the remedy of Sacraments, who reioyce without end in the presence of God, beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed by his brightnesse into the brightnesse of the incomprehensible Deity, they tast the word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for euer.

3. Whilst I remember these thy wonderfull works, all spirituall comfort whatsoeuer becometh very tedious vnto me: for that as long as I behould not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no accompt of whatsoeuer I see or heare in this life. Thou art my witnes, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature giue me rest, but thou my God, whome I desire to behould euerlastingly. But this is not possible whilst I remaine

in this mortall life. Therfore I must frame my selfe to much patience, and submit my selfe to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also, O Lord, who now reioyce with thee in the Kingdome of heauen, whilest they liued, expected in faith and great patience the cõming of thy glory. What they beleiued, I beleiue: what they hoped for, I expect; whither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy grace. In the meane time I will goe forward in faith, strengthened by the examples of the Saints. I haue also deuout bookes for my comfort, and for the guide of my life, and aboue all these, thy most holy Body for a singular remedy and refuge.

4. For I perceaue two things to be chiefly necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable vnto me. Whilst I am kept in the prison of this body, I acknowledge my selfe to stand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou hast therfore giuen vnto me, weake creature, thy

sacred

sacred Body for the refection of my soule and body, & hast set thy word as a light vnto my feet: without these two I could not well liue. For the word of God is the light of the soule, and thy Sacrament, the bread of life. These also may be cally'd the two tables set on the one side & the other, in the store-house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, conteyning the sacred bread, that is, the precious body of Christ: the other is of the diuine law, conteyning holy doctrine, teaching true faith, & certainely leading to the part of the Temple within the veile, where are the Holy of Holies. Thanks be vnto thee, Lord Iesus, light of euerlasting light, for thy table of holy doctrine, at which thou seruest vs by thy seruants the Prophets and Apostles, and other Doctours.

5. Thanks be vnto thee Creatour and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charity to the whole world hast prepared a greater supper, wherin thou hast offered to be eaten,

eaten, not the mysticall lambe, but thine owne most sacred Body and Bloud, reioycing all the faithful with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with thy heauenly Cuppe, in which are all the delights of heauen, and the holy Angels do feast with vs, but with a more happy sweetnesse.

6. O how great and honourable is the office of Priests, to whome it is graunted with sacred words to consecrat the Lord of Maiesty, with their lips to blesse him, with their hands to hould him, with their owne mouth to receaue him, and to administer him to others! O how cleane ought to be those hands! How pure that mouth! How holy the body! How vnsported the hart of the Priests, in whome the Authour of purity so often entreth! Nothing but holy, no word but chast and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, which so often receaueth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chast ought to

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be the eyes, that are wont to behould the body of Christ, the hands pure and lifted vp to heauen, that vse to handle the Creator of heauen and earth. Vnto the Priests especially it is said in the Law: Be ye holy, for that I your Lord God am holy.

8. Assist vs Almighty God with thy grace, that we, who haue vndertaken the office of Priesthood, may serue thee worthily and deuoutly in all purity, and with a sincere conscience. And if we cannot liue in so great innocency as we ought to do, graunt vs notwithstanding in due manner to bewaile the sinnes which we haue committed, and in the spirit of humility, and sincere intention to serue thee hereafter with more fervour.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

That he that is to communicate, ought to prepare himselfe with great diligence.

The voyce of the Beloued.

I AM the louer of purity, and the giuer of all sanctity. I seeke a pure hart, and there is the place of my rest. Make ready & adorne for me a great chamber, and I will make with thee the Pasch with my Disciples. If thou wilt haue me come vnto thee, and remaine with thee, purge the old leauen, and make cleane the dwelling of thy hart: shut out the whole world, and all tumult of vices: sit like a sparrow solitary vpon the house top, and thinke of thy offences in the bitternesse of thy soule. For euery louer prepareth the best and faireſt roome for his beloued, & heerein is knowne the

the affection of him that intertaineth his beloued.

2. Know thou notwithstanding that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy selfe a whole yeare togeather, and thinke on nothing else: but of my mercy and Grace only thou art suffered to come to my table, like a beggar inuited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to returne him for his benefits, but to humble himselfe, & giue him thāks. Doe what lieth in thee, & do it diligētly, not for custom, nor for necessity, but with feare and reuerence, and harty affection receaue the body of thy beloued Lord and God who vouchsafeth to come vnto thee. I am he that haue called thee, I haue commaunded it to be done, I will supply what is wanting in thee, come & receaue me.

3. When I bestow the grace of deuotion on thee, giue thankes to God, for it is giuen thee, not for that thou

thou deseruest it, but because I haue mercy on thee. If thou haue it not, but rather feele thy selfe dry, continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and giue not ouer vntill thou deserue to receaue some crumme or drop of grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee, neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and make thee better. Thou comest that thou maist be sanctified by me, and vnited vnto me, that thou maist receaue new grace, and be stirred vp againe to amendment. Neglect not this grace, but prepare thy hart with all diligence, and receaue thy beloued into thy soule.

4. But thou oughtest not only to prepare thy selfe to deuotion before Communion, but carefully also to conserue thy self therin, after thou hast receaued the Sacrament. Neither is the carefull guard of thy selfe after, lesse exacted, then deuout preparation before. For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining againe

of

of greater grace, becauſe that mans mind becometh very indiſpoſed, if he preſently powre himſelfe out to outward comforts. Beware of much talke, remaine in ſome ſecret place, and inioy thy God. For thou haſt him whome al the word cannot take from thee. I am he, to whome thou oughteſt wholy to giue thy ſelfe, that ſo thou maiſt liue heerafter, not in thy ſelfe, but in me, without all care.

CHAP. XIII.

That a deuout ſoule ought to deſire with her whole hart to be vnited vnto Chriſt in the B. Sacrament.

The voice of the Diſciple.

HOVV may I obtaine this, o Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole hart vnto thee, and enioy thee as my ſoule deſireth? And that

that not man may looke vpon me, nor any creature moue me or respect me, but thou alone maist speake vnto me, and I to thee, as the beloued is wont to speake to his beloued, and a friend to banquet with his friend. This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholy vnited vnto thee, and may withdraw my hart from all created things, and more and more, by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learne to tast of heauenly & euerlasting sweetnes. O Lord God, when shal I be wholy vnited and absorpt by thee, and altogeather forgetfull of my selfe! thou in me, and I in thee, and so graunt vs both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloued, the choicest amongst thousands, in who my soule hath taken pleasure to dwel all the daves of her life. Thou art my peace-maker in whome is greatest peace, and true rest, without whome is labour and sorrow, and infinite misery. Thou art a hidden God, & thy counsell is not with the wicked, but thy

thy ſpeach is with the humble and ſimple of hart. O Lord, how ſweet is thy ſpirit, who to the end, thou mighteſt ſhew thy ſweetnes towards thy children, vouchſafeſt to feed them with the moſt delightſome bread which deſcendeth from heauen, and is full of all ſweetnes. Surely there is no other Nation ſo great, that hath Gods approaching vnto them, as thou our God art preſent to al thy faithful, vnto whome for their daily comfort, and for the lifting vp of their harts to heauen thou giueſt thy ſelfe to be eaten & enioyed.

3. For what other nation is there ſo famous, as the Chriſtian people? or what creature vnder heauen ſo beloued, as a deuout ſoule, to whome God himſelfe commeth to feed her with his glorious fleſh? O vnſpeakable grace! O admirable fauour! O infinite loue ſingularly beſtowed vpon man! But what ſhall I giue vnto our Lord in returne of this grace, for ſo ſingular a charity? There is no other thing more gratefull that

I am able to giue, then to beſtow my hart wholy on my God, and to vnite it perfectly vnto him. Then ſhall all my bowells reioyce, when my ſoule ſhall be perfectly vnited vnto God. Then he will ſay vnto me: if thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will anſwere him: Vouch-ſafe, O Lord, to remaine with me, & I will be with thee. This is my whole deſire, that my hart be vnited vnto thee.

CHAP. XIIII.

Of the feruent deſire of ſome deuout perſons to receaue the Body of Chriſt.

The voice of the Diſciple.

O HOVV great is the ſtore of thy ſweetneſſe, O Lord, which thou haſt hidden for them that feare thee! When I remember ſome deuout perſons who come vnto thy Sacrament, O Lord, with great deuotion and affection, I am oftentimes confounded, and bluſh within my ſelfe,

ſelfe, that I come ſo negligently and coldly to thy Altar, to thy table of holy Communion, that I remaine ſo dry, and without ſpirituall motion or feeling, that I am not wholy inflamed in thy preſence, my God, nor ſo earneſtly drawne and moued, as many deuout perſons haue beene, who out of a vehement deſire of receauing, and a feeling affection of hart, could not containe themſelues from weeping, but with the deſire both of ſoule and body they earneſtly longed after thee, O God, the liuely fountaine, being not otherwiſe able to temper nor ſatisfy their hunger, but by receauing thy body with all ioy & ſpirituall greedineſſe.

2. O moſt ardent faith of thoſe perſons, a probable argument of thy ſacred preſence For theſe truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whoſe hart burneth ſo within them, whilſt thou, O bleſſed Ieſu, walkeſt with them. Such deſire and deuotion, ſo vehement loue and feruency is oftentimes far off from me. Be mercifull

mercifull vnto me, good Iesu, sweet & benigne Lord, and graunt me thy poore needy creature, to feele sometimes at least, in this holy Sacrament, a little cordiall desire of thy loue that my faith may be more strengthned, my hope in thy goodnesse increased, & that my charity once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heauenly Manna, may neuer decay.

3. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to giue me the grace I desire, & to visit me in thy bounteous clemẽcy with the spirit of feruour when it shall please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially deuoted vnto thee: yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to haue this great inflamed desire, praying & crauing that I may participate with all such thy feruent louers, & be numbred among them in their holy company.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of deuotion is obtayned by humility and denyall of our ſelues.

The voyce of the Beloued.

THOV oughteſt to ſeeke the grace of deuotion inſtantly, to aſke it earneſtly, to expect it patiently and confideatly, to receiue it ioyfully, to keep it humbly, to worke with it diligently, & to commit the time and manner of this heauenly viſitation to God, vntill it ſhall be his pleaſure to come. Thou oughteſt chiefly to humble thy ſelfe, when thou feeleſt inwardly little or no deuotion, and yet not to be too much deiected, nor to grieue inordinately for it. God often giueth in a ſhort moment that, which he hath long time denyed: he giueth ſometimes in the end that, which in the beginning of prayer he differred to graunt.

2. If grace ſhould be alwaies preſently giuen, & at hand euer with

a wish, it could not be well indured by a weake man. Therfore deuotion is to be expected with good hope, & humble patience: yet impute it to thy selfe, and thy sinnes, when it is not giuen thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a small matter that hindreth & hideth grace frō yᵉ, if it be to be called smal, & not rather a great matter, that hindreth so great a good. And if thou remoue this, be it great or small, & perfectly ouercom it, thou shalt haue thy desire.

3. For presently as soone as thou giuest thy selfe to God, & seekest not this, nor that, for thine owne pleasure or will, but setlest thy selfe wholy in me, thou shalt find thy selfe vnited vnto him, & quiet. For nothing will tast so well, & please thee so much, as the will & pleasure of God. Whosoeuer therfore with a sincere hart directeth his intention to God, & purgeth himselfe from al inordinat loue, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receaue grace, & worthy of the gift of deuotion. For our Lord be-

beſtoweth his bleſſings there, where he findeth his veſſels empty. And how much the more perfectly one forſaketh theſe baſeſt things, & dieth to himſelfe by contempt of himſelfe: ſo much the more ſpeedily grace cõmeth, and entreth in more plentifully, & lifteth vp the hart that is free, to a higher ſtate of grace.

4. Then ſhall he ſee, and abound, & wonder, & his hart ſhall be enlarged, becauſe the hand of our Lord is with him, & he hath put himſelfe wholy into his hand for euer. Behold ſo ſhall the man be bleſſed, that ſeeketh Almighty God with his whole hart, & taketh not his ſoule in vaine. This man deſerueth great grace of diuine vnion, in receauing the holy Euchariſt, for that he regardeth not his owne deuotion & comfort, but aboue all deuotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour & glory of God.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifeſt our neceſſities vnto Chriſt, and to craue his grace.

The voice of the Diſciple.

O MOST ſweet and louing Lord, whome I now deſire to receaue deuoutly, thou knoweſt my infirmity, & the neceſſity which I endure, with how many ſinnes I am oppreſſed, how often I am grieued, tempted, troubled, & defiled. I come vnto thee for remedy, I craue of thee thy heauenly comfort, and the eaſe of my paine. I ſpeake to him that knoweth all things, to whome all my ſecrets are open, & who can only perfectly comfort & help me. Thou knoweſt what it is, wherof aboue all things I ſtand in moſt need, & how poore I am in vertues.

2. Behould I ſtand before thee, poore and naked, calling for grace, and crauing mercy, Refreſh this thy hungry

hungry & needy creature, giue heate vnto my coldneſſe with the fire of thy loue, giue light vnto my blindnes with the brightneſſe of thy preſence. Turne all earthly things vnto me, into bitterneſſe, all things grieuous and contrary, into patience, all baſe & created things, into contempt and obliuion. Lift vp my hart to thee in heauen, & ſuffer me not to wander vpon earth: be thou only ſweet and delightſome vnto me frō henceforth for euermore, for thou only art my meate, & my drinke, my loue & my ioy, my delight & all my good.

3. O that with thy preſence thou wouldeſt wholy inflame, burne, and change me into thee, that I might be made one ſpirit with thee, by the grace of inward vnſon & melting of burning loue! Suffer me not to goe from thee hungry & dry, but deale mercifully with me, as thou haſt oftentimes dealt wonderfully with thy Saints What meruaile if I ſhould be wholy inflamed by thee, and dye in my ſelfe, ſith thou art fire burning &

neuer decaying, loue purifying the hart, & inlightening the vnderſtanding.

CHAP. XVII.

Of burning loue, & vehement deſire to receaue Chriſt.

The voice of the Diſciple.

WITH great deuotion & burning loue, with moſt harty affection and feruour I deſire to receaue thee, O Lord, as many Saints and deuout perſons haue deſired thee, when they receaued thy Sacrament, who were moſt pleaſing vnto thee in holineſſe of life, and moſt feruent in deuotion. O my God my euerlaſting loue, my whole good, my happineſſe without end, I would gladly receaue thee with the moſt vehement deſire, & worthy reuerence, that any of the Saints euer had, or could feele.

2. And although I be vnworthy to haue al thoſe feelings of deuotion, yet

yet I offer vnto thee the whole affection of my hart, as if I alone had those most sweet inflamed desires: yea whatsoeuer also a deuout mind can conceaue & desire, all that, with greatest reuereuce, and most inward affection I offer & present vnto thee. I wish to desire nothing to my selfe, but freely & most willingly to sacrifice my selfe and all mine vnto thee, my Lord God, my Creatour, & my Redeemer. I desire to receaue thee this day with such affection, reuerence, praise and honour, with such gratitude, worthinesse, & loue, with such faith, hope, and purity, as thy most blessed Mother the glorious Virgin Mary receaued, & desired thee, when she humbly and deuoutly answered the Angell, who declared vnto her the mystery of thy Incarnation, & sayd: Behold the handmaid of our Lord, let it be done vnto me according thy word.

3. And as thy blessed Forerunner, the most excellent amongst the Saints Iohn Baptist cheerfully leaped

with ioy of the holy Ghoſt, whilſt he was yet ſhut vp in his mothers wõbe: & afterwards ſeing Ieſus walking amongſt men, humbling himſelfe very much, ſaid with deuout affection: The friend of the Bridegrome that ſtandeth and heareth him, reioyceth with ioy for the voice of the Bridegrome: ſo I alſo wiſh to be inflamed with great & holy deſires, & to offer my ſelfe vp to thee with my whole hart. Wherfore I offer alſo and preſent vnto thee the ioyes, feruent deſires, exceſſes of mind, ſpirituall illuminations, & heauenly viſions of all deuout harts, with all the vertues & praiſes exerciſed, and to be exerciſed by all creatures in heauen and earth, for my ſelfe, and all ſuch as are recommended to me in prayer, that by all thou maiſt be worthily praiſed, and glorified for euer.

4. Receaue, my Lord God, the affections of my hart and deſires, whith I haue to giue thee, infinite praiſe & thanks, which according to the meaſure of thy vnſpeakable greatneſſe

greatneſſe are due vnto thee. Theſe I yield thee, & deſire to yield thee euery day & moment, & I doe intreat, and inuite all the heauenly ſpirits, & al thy deuout ſeruants to giue thanks & praiſes togeather with me.

5. Let all People, Tribes, and Tongues praiſe thee, & magnify thy holy & ſweet name with great ioy, & feruent deuotion, & let al that reuerẽntly & deuoutly celebrate thy moſt high Sacrament, & receaue it with ful faith, deſerue to find grace, & mercy at thy hands, & pray humbly for me ſinfull creature. And when they ſhall haue obtained their deſired deuotion & ioyfull vnion, & depart from thy ſacred heauenly table wel comforted & meruailouſly refreſhed, let them vouchſafe to remember my poore & needy ſoule.

CHAP. XVIII.

That mā be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his sēse vnto faith.

The voice of the Beloued.

THOV oughtest to beware of curious & vnprofitable searching into this most profound Sacramēt, if thou wilt not sink into the depth of doubt. He that is a searcher of Maiesty, shalbe oppressed by glory. God is able to work more then man can vnderstand. A pious & humble inquiry of truth is tolerable, so he be alwaies ready to be taught, & do endeauour to walke in the sound pathes of the ā-cient Fathers doctrine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity, that forsaketh the difficult waies of questions, & goeth on in the plaine & assured path of Gods Cōmandements. Many haue lost deuotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith & sincere life are exacted at thy hāds, not height of vnderstanding, nor the depth

depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not vnderstād, nor cōceaue those things that are vnder thee, how shalt thou be able to cōprehend those that are aboue thee? Submit thy selfe to God, & let thy sense be subiect to faith, & the light of knowledge shall be giuen thee in that degree, as shall be profitable & necessary for thee.

3. Some are grieuously tempted about faith & the Sacrament, but this is not to be imputed to thē, but rather to the enemy. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou giue answere to the doubts moued by the enemy, but beleiue the words of God, beleiue his Saints and Prophets, & the wicked Serpent will fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the seruant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels & sinners, whō he already securely possesseth, but he sundry waies tempteth & vexeth the faithfull and deuout.

4. Go forward therfore with a sincere & vndoubted faith, & come

to the Sacrament with vnfaigned reuerence. And whatsoeuer thou art not able to vnderstand, cõmit securely to Almighty God. God deceaueth thee not: he is deceaued that trusteth too much to himselfe. God walketh with the simple, reuealeth himselfe to the hũble, giueth vnderstanding to little ones, openeth the seses of pure minds, & hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reason is weake, and may be deceaued, but true fayth cannot be deceaued.

5. All reason & naturall search ought to follow faith, not to go before it, nor impugne it. For faith and loue do chiefly excell, & worke in a hidden manner in this most blessed & excellent Sacrament. God, who is euerlasting, & of infinite power, doth great & inscrutable things in heauen & in earth, & there is no searching of his wonderfull workes. If the works of God were such, as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderfull & vnspeakable.

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Deliuer my soul & Eternall

Jehovah

Blessed